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Communication of corporate social responsibility:

An analysis of different brands in the outdoor industry

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Desporto

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Resumo

O estudo teve como objetivo analisar o papel da responsabilidade social empresarial (RSE) na indústria de atividades ao ar livre e verificar a implementação da comunicação da RSE nos sites das marcas deste sector.

Este documento fornece uma visão geral do conceito da RSE e marketing de sustentabilidade. Consequentemente, a comunicação da RSE foi observada através dum olhar mais atento e também a definição de três estratégias de marketing relacionadas com a sustentabilidade. Além disso, analisou-se a situação atual da RSE na indústria de atividades ao ar livre.

O estudo desenvolveu-se em duas fases. Primeiro, realizou-se uma entrevista aberta em quatro corporações de marcas de atividades ao ar livre. Segundo, de acordo com a literatura e as entrevistas desenvolveu-se um índice de referência. Foram investigadas 22 marcas do sector de forma a comparar a comunicação da RSE online.

O estudo mostra que a RSE e, em especial, a comunicação da RSE externa das marcas desempenha um papel crucial na indústria de atividades ao ar livre. Com base na comunicação da RSE online verificaram-se três estratégias de marketing de sustentabilidade: renegação, minimização de risco e diferenciação. Todas as marcas comunicam de alguma forma a RSE, o que prova que comunicação da RSE não pode ser ignorada. Apenas algumas marcas se caracterizam como renegadoras da comunicação da RSE, uma vez que desenvolvem pouca desta mesma.. A maioria apresenta uma comunicação da minimização do risco enquanto algumas marcas se destacam pela sua estratégia de diferenciação.

Palavras-chave: Responsabilidade social corporativa, marketing de sustentabilidade, comunicação da RSE, imagem sustentabilidade da marca, indústria das atividades ao ar livre, classificação da marca.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the role of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) in the outdoor industry and the implementation of CSR-communication on different outdoor brands' websites.

This paper provides an overview of the framework of CSR and sustainability marketing. Consequently, a closer look on CSR-communication and on the definition of three sustainability related marketing strategies is taken. Furthermore, this paper defines the current situation of CSR in the outdoor industry.

The research part is divided into two parts. Firstly, a standardized open-end interview with four different outdoor brands was conducted. Secondly, a benchmark tool was developed, based on literature and the results of the former conducted interviews. In total 22 different outdoor brands' online CSR-communication are investigated and taken in comparison.

This thesis shows that CSR and especially brands' external CSR-communication play a crucial role in the outdoor industry. It is analysed, related to the CSR-communication, a classification into, denier, risk minimizer and differentiator, is identifiable. All analysed outdoor brands implement CSR-communication, what proofs that CSR-communication cannot be ignored anymore. Only a few brands are characterised as denier of CSR-communication, as they implement almost no communication of CSR. The majority shows the communication characteristics of risk mitigation whereas some brands stand out as brand differentiators.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, sustainability marketing, CSR-communication, sustainable brand image, outdoor industry, brand classification.

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List of abbreviations

CR	Corporate responsibility
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
EOG	European Outdoor Group
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
FWF	Fair Wear Foundation
GOTS	Global Organic Textile Standards
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PFC	Perfluorocarbons
RDS	Responsible Down Standard
SAC	Sustainable Apparel Coalition
TBL	Triple bottom line
WCED	World Commission on Economic Development

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1. Introduction

“In today’s society and business world, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a highly relevant topic” (Lunenberg, Gosselt, & De Jong, 2016, p.943). Companies try to improve their brand reputation, consumer loyalty and consumer trust by communication CSR (Lunenberg et al., 2016). Thus, CSR-communication became a crucial role.

Over the last 30 years terms like global warming, environment pollution, sustainability, fair labour and CSR distract an immense attention within the society as well as in the world of business, what create a new challenge for brand leaders. Companies got the important task to balance brand reputation, consumer trust, mass consumption, radical corporation transparency and still not to forget sales and growth. The traditional marketing aspect of simple promoting a product or service became outdated, the commercial marketing slowly developed to the today known sustainability marketing. This is why the correlation of CSR and communication became a big role for organisations with the target motto *“Do good things and talk about it on every communication channel”* (Heinrich, 2013, p.2; own translation).

One of the industry branches that recognised a remarkable growth in the last decade is the outdoor industry, moving to a multibillion industry sector (Cobb, 2015). But the outdoor industry does not just demonstrate an immense gain in profit, also the external attention on outdoor brands’ CSR engagement won in crucial importance. The outdoor brands industry demonstrates a direct correlation with the environment, as it equips the people with products for spending time in nature. However, based on this, outdoor brands are also asked for building products with the best quality, durability and technology. This causes outdoor companies the challenge of both, satisfying the consumers’ requests for high-end quality and implementing a sustainable and responsible process.

As the consumers’ awareness is more and more coined by the sustainable development, companies have to face the requests for more transparency and communication of corporate responsibility. Also non-governmental organisations (NGO) and media fair labour associations lead the focus on outdoor brands’ CSR.

Based on its external CSR-communication and radical advertisement campaigns, the brand *Patagonia* became the flagship for a responsible company in the outdoor industry (CSR-central, 2015; Chouinard, 2006). This makes *Patagonia* to a brand differentiator by communicating its CSR engagement. But is *Patagonia* the only outdoor brand that builds

brand differentiation by using CSR-communication or do others also react on the sustainable consumers' behaviour and follow the implementation of CSR-communication? Did CSR really become such a crucial role in the outdoor industry?

The aim of this thesis is firstly to investigate the importance of sustainability marketing and CSR, especially CSR-communication, within outdoor brands and secondly to analyse the CSR-communication performance on different outdoor brands' websites.

The first part of this thesis provides an overview of the historical development of CSR and its definition. Furthermore, a closer look on sustainability marketing is taken, what leads to the conceptualisation of CSR-communication and the introduction of the three sustainability related marketing strategies. Consequently this paper defines the current situation of CSR within the entire outdoor industry and the importance of CSR-communication for outdoor brands.

The research part is divided into two parts. Firstly, a standardized open-end interview with four different outdoor brands was conducted and analysed. Secondly, a benchmark tool was developed, based on literature and the results of the former conducted interviews. In total 22 different outdoor brands' online CSR-communication are investigated and taken in comparison.

At the end, all results are summarised and a conclusion with future research suggestions are given.

2. Literature Review

The following chapter provides an overview of the consulted literature this thesis is based on. The first part demonstrates the framework and definition of the concept of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR). Furthermore the author builds the link between marketing and CSR and introduces the concept of sustainability marketing, followed by the definition of CSR-communication and its role for companies' brand equity.

2.1 Review and analysis of CSR

Sustainability, fair labour conditions, fair production and transparency became important facts in the society of today whereby CSR won in the last decade an immense focus in the world of business. The following chapter defines and builds a framework of the development of CSR and shows why it takes the world of business by a storm.

2.1.1 Historical development of CSR

CSR, also known as *Corporate Responsibility* (CR) is not a complete new invented concept. The first existing writings about CSR can be traced back to the 1930s, but already long before the first actions of CSR were conducted. In the 19th century businesses made their first steps for the welfare of their employees and their impact on society. That means even long before there was even a definition or a structured concept of CSR, business men undertook the first steps of focusing on positive action for the rest of the society while being economical (Blowfield & Murray, 2011).

From the 1930s/ 1940s the field called "CSR" first focused on the role of business leaders, for example how they manage their company while considering also the impact on society and local communities. Finally the first important appearance of "CSR as a concept" in the world of business was in the 1950s by Howard Bowen. The focus of CSR slowly shifted towards the behaviour of companies as a whole instead of just the individual behaviour. The "modern era" of CSR was born and the development of a new field with academic literature on management began (Carroll, 1999). Bowen, the "father of CSR" published the first book about CSR, called *The Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* and defined CSR as the obligation of businessmen to pursue their policies and follow their lines of actions in terms of the objectives and values of society. The main question at that time was what responsibilities of

businessmen are expected by society (Giurgila, 2014). In the late 1960s and beginning 1970s according to CSR the first massive media wave appeared, what forced managers to start integrating CSR issues in their management functions. These years were marked by a rapid growth of social movements for labour rights, consumer protection and environmental awareness. Davis (1960) continued with the definition of Bowen and extended the CSR focus by direct economical or technical interests (as cited in Ejlersen, 2012). Thus the first steps toward a relationship between business and social interest were made. While in the first years of CSR the attention was more focused on short-term consequences it slowly shifted towards long-term interests as the concept of stakeholders appears (Ejlersen, 2012). In 1973 Davis emphasised that “*corporate responsibility begins where the law ends*” (Davis, 1973, p.313). That means CSR is about how companies have a positive impact on society above and beyond what constitutes their legal obligations. Finally, Carroll created the so-called “three dimensional CSR conceptual model” what consisted out of corporate responsibilities, social issues of business and corporate actions. The corporate responsibilities are based on economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic issues. While social issues include labour standards, human rights, environment protection and anti-corruption, the corporate actions are more concerned with generalized modes of response (e.g. reactive, defensive, accommodative and proactive). In the 1980s the voluntary basis started and more and more measures and researches on CSR were conducted. The late 1990s mark the so-called “second wave” of CSR, which describes CSR as a public relations tool and finally brought the focus on the triple bottom line. Other important terms were introduced, like “corporate sustainability” which shows how environmental changes force companies to take responsibility for the society and environment. *Corporate citizenship* also showed up and emphasized the role of business as a citizen in global society.

This development leads to the nowadays concept of CSR: “*integration of social and environmental concern; voluntariness; ethical behaviour; human and labour rights; fight against corruption; transparency and accountability*” (Giurgila, 2014, p.15). Corporations around the world are forced to take a new role within the society, which means on one hand to reach business profit but on the other hand to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the next generations to meet their own needs. Miluwi (2013) emphasises that the 21st century is marked by new challenges and opportunities caused by globalisation, an inclusive development and the impacts of climate change. This shows that

CSR became an essential element in the business' operations and that it is impossible to ignore nowadays.

2.1.2 Definitions of CSR

CSR paraphrases originally the responsible entrepreneurial acting of a company (Schaffner, 2013). But focusing on the conceptualization of CSR a big disunity stands out. Thus there is no clear definition of CSR neither a generalized concept. This shows how versatile and complex the topic CSR is in the world of business. The reason of this term confusion is that there are so many different stakeholder groups, like enterprises, labour unions and civil societies right up to scientists. Even the increasing interests of companies, governments, academics or societies multiply the definitions of CSR. Since CSR is taking more and more control in the world of business, non-governmental-organisations (NGO) gain an immense attention. According to Kinnell and MacDougall (1997) a NGO is an organisation *“that, after wages and expenses have been taken into account, is prohibited from dispersing any additional revenue to management or any other controlling personnel such as trustees”* (as cited in Beech, & Chadwick, 2007, p.27). Most of the time, NGOs are also called *non-profit-organisation* what emphasises more that NGOs are not allowed to make any profit during a business year. Indeed the term CSR has enforced international but there is still no general understanding behind this topic. The question nowadays is if a general conceptualizing of CSR is necessary because of the constantly ongoing development of sustainability and sustainable awareness of our society, it is quite complex to create a main definition.

Nevertheless there are also legal definitions of CSR such as those of the European Commission (EC): *“CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis”* (EC, 2002, p.5). Almost ten years later the EC puts another definition forward which says that CSR is *“the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society”* and emphasises that corporations should implement a process with integration of social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumers concerns into the core business strategy and operations. Furthermore corporations should follow the objective of maximising the shared value for all shareholder, stakeholders and society at large, while considering the prevention and mitigation of possible impacts (EC, 2011). Both definitions include the importance of social and environmental issues, whereby you can see how the CSR concept

changed ethical concerns as well as human rights and consumer concerns won its importance for business activities. It is important to emphasise that CSR are voluntary business activities and processes, as EC (2002) defines it.

CSR is also known as *corporate sustainability*, what defines the satisfaction of costumers' expectations by a company with the consideration of social, environmental and economic values from its operations as well as meeting the corporation's needs (Emrich, 2015).

Another important aspect when conceptualizing CSR is, next to the corporation point of view, the stakeholder's understanding and expectations of CSR as it points out other important aspects. For stakeholders CSR is the corporation's respect of all their interests and requests as well as the consideration of the environment while discharging their profit-focused business activities (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007).

As one can see, defining CSR is a quite complex approach because it can be seen from different perspectives and each one has its own expectations of a corporation's responsibilities. Hence all these definitions lead to the nowadays CSR understanding, on which this thesis will be based on. CSR is a concept anchored in the business approach which includes the integration of social and environmental concerns, ethical business behaviour the consideration of human and labour rights, to provide transparency to all stakeholders and this on a voluntary basis (Giurgila, 2014).

2.2 Sustainability marketing

According to Andreu, Casado-Díaz and Mattila (2015), in relation to marketing, CSR demonstrates the management of responsible and irresponsible acts towards all stakeholders, in relation to environmental, ethical and social issues, in a way that the corporate's benefits are still ensured. This quotation defines the link between CSR and marketing, what builds the framework for the so-called *Sustainability Marketing*.

The following chapter will first conceptualise sustainability and marketing separately and show consequently the development of sustainability marketing.

2.2.1 Framework of sustainability marketing

“Sustainability refers to an organization’s activities, typically considered voluntary, that demonstrate the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations and in interactions with stakeholders” (Miluwi, 2013, p.94). The definition of the term sustainability is based on the so-called sustainable development (Emrich, 2015, p.7). According to the World Commission on Economic Development (WCED) it is defined as the meet of the needs of today’s generation without negative impacts on future generations. This definition brings a number of challenges to the world of business and requires companies to act in the following “three time zones” defined by Blowfield and Murray (2011):

- Dealing with the corporation’s liabilities, which were created at a time when company’s costs were externalised without any limitations onto the environment, society and future generations;
- Acting like a company as a responsible citizen within society;
- Considering the interests and right of future generations.

The whole conceptualisation of sustainable development is based on the past, present and still ongoing global warming which is caused by the society’s increasing consumption and production what brings pollution, lack of waste management and the use up of all resources.

But slowly politicians, celebrities, world-famous companies, sustainability organisations and NGOs ring the alarm clock and lead the attention of nowadays society on its consumption and life awareness.

For a better understanding of the complexity of sustainability marketing it is important firstly to define marketing as its own. It has already a big history behind and is always exposed to the ongoing changes in the business world. Marketing is the link between corporation and its end consumer, which are the most important part of a company. That makes the world of business not possible to imagine without optimal marketing strategies. Marketing as a term possesses various definitions. One definition was developed by Grönroos (1990) who describes marketing as the tool of creating, keeping and reinforcing the relationship to customers as well as satisfying all benefits of the involved parts (as cited in Pina e Cunha, Duarte, O'Shaughnessy, & Marcelino, 2004). According to Kotler (2002) marketing is rather a social and business process that meets the needs of individuals or groups by the exchange of products and values (as cited in Pina e Cunha et al, 2004). Another and one of the most recent ones is the definition from the American Marketing Association (AMA, 2013): *“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”* (as cited in Rosemeier, 2015, p.9).

All three definitions only include the companies' processes for communicating their products or services to their shareholders and take the best profit out of it. The focus of the traditional marketing is on the production and sales without any referring economic, social and environmental limits. None of them shows any connection of to the previous defined sustainable development.

The definitions describe marketing as the main communication tool of organisations to its customers. Creating an optimal marketing strategy is quite complex for marketers and involves various factors. Due to that McCarthy developed in 1960 an important tool for a good working marketing strategy, the so-called *marketing mix*, also known as the *4P's of marketing*. The following figure will show the correlation of the four elements:

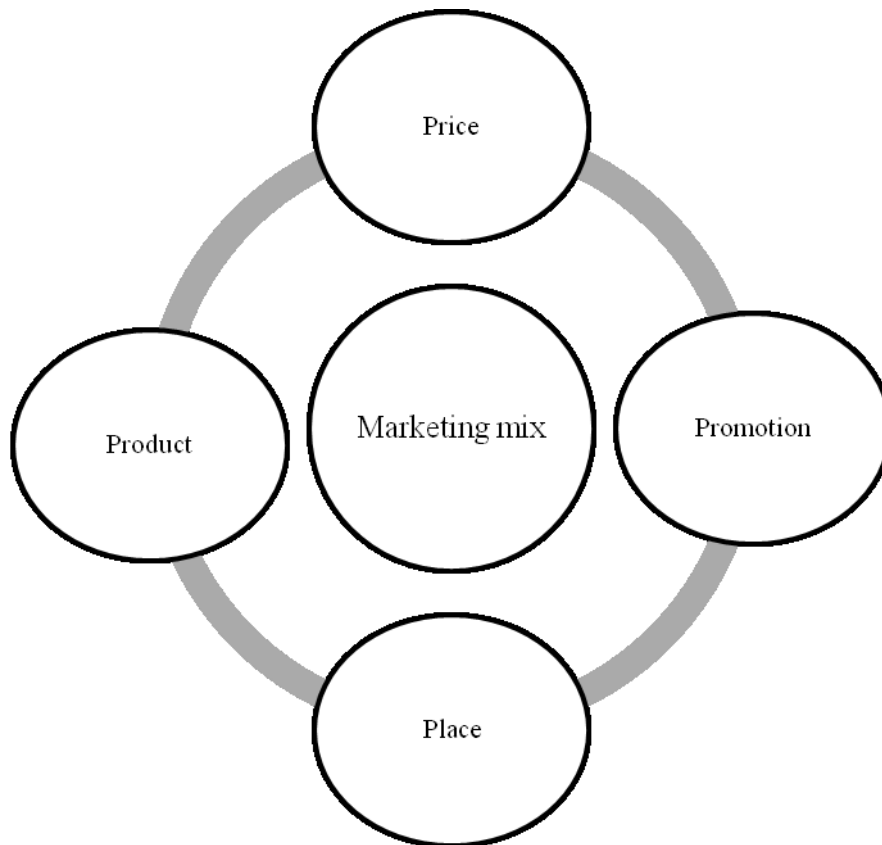


Figure 1. Traditional marketing mix (as cited in Rosemeier, 2015, p.10).

Figure one shows the traditional marketing mix, which got the following definition by the AMA: “*Marketing-mix is the cooperation of controllable variables of marketing which a company uses to achieve the aspired level of sales*” (Pina e Cunha et al., 2004, p.15; own translation). As figure one shows, that the traditional marketing mix represents the strategic combination of the four elements of marketing, called *product*, *place*, *price* and *promotion* (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). It is obvious that the traditional marketing mix does not evoke any relationship between social, economic and environmental forces and the corporation. But caused by the change and influence of the society’s awareness and the attention on the companies’ CSR efforts by NGOs the world of marketing has to take a step further. The social and industrial movement, which has been going for several decades, is now forcing companies to take into account the value of nature and its volume.

Consultant John Elkington coined the term *triple bottom line* (TBL) the first time in 1998. The TBL is also known for its *three P’s*, people, planet and profit. It is a tool that measures the human capital (social health/people), the natural capital (planet) and the capital (profit). In 2007 the United Nations simplified the definition of the TBL and described it as a measuring

tool for the actual costs of government subventions to industry (Chouinard, & Stanley, 2012). Companies of the 21st century have to step back from the traditional bottom line, which refers just “profit” or “loss” and measure also their social, economic and environmental profits and consider these in their core business and marketing strategies.

So, considering the sustainable development, the change of society’s sustainability awareness as well as the TBL, businesses are forced to build a link between CSR and marketing and implement the sustainability marketing.

2.2.2 The development from traditional to sustainability marketing

The previous chapter already pointed out that there is a perceivable change happening in the world of marketing. The traditional marketing strategies, also known as commercial marketing experienced a crucial transformation to the already defined sustainability marketing. But this did not happen from one day to another, as the following figure and chapter shows:

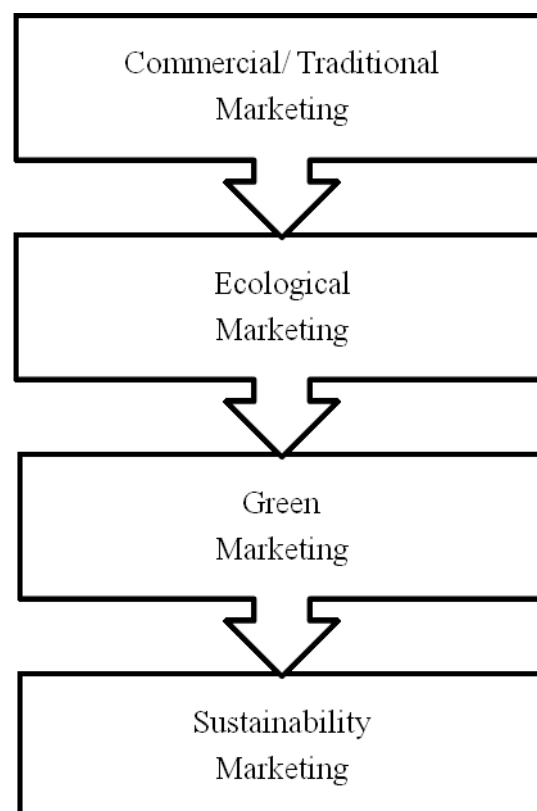


Figure 2. Development of sustainability marketing (Rosemeier, 2015, p.8).

As already mentioned in chapter 2.2.1, marketing is an ongoing and always changing part in the business world. Figure two shows the changing steps from traditional marketing to the nowadays known sustainability marketing. The traditional, also called commercial, marketing already made the first steps in direction sustainability marketing in the early 1970's. The society has slowly become aware that the industrial production causes air, water and earth pollution and the so-called *ecological marketing* was developed by Kassarian in 1971 (as cited in Rosemeier, 2015). Therefore, ecological marketing was at the end just an immersion of the commercial marketing approach, as it still did not take into account the sustainability development. In the 1980's companies started to sell the first "green products", which had a lower impact on the environment, thus the era of *green marketing* was born. Based on the commercial marketing elements, green marketers focus on brand differentiation but also take environmental aspects in consideration (Emrich, p.341). During the 1990's green marketing went a step back by the phenomenon of the so-called *greenwashing*. Greenwashing also has numerous definitions but the most appropriate is: "*Greenwashing is a rhetorical and communicative misapplication of ethic messages whereby sustainability is only pretended by the corporation to its consumers*" (Emrich, 2015, p.29; own translation). Related to the definition of greenwashing it is also known as the *green lie*. Most of the time corporations implement sustainability marketing communication so consumers create a sustainable perception towards the companies. But taking a second and closer look, many companies just talk about good things, but do not implement them in their core business.

In the beginning of the 21st century the green marketing got a new impulse by new technology and first official and strict governmental regulations. Also the new consumer generations, the millennials led the buying behaviour in direction of green products (Rosemeier, 2015).

But still after all these changes in the world of marketing, ecological as well as green marketing still did not include the sustainability approach. This aspect forced in the last decade more and more, that corporations implement the sustainability marketing and always take into account the sustainable development.

2.2.3 Definition of sustainability marketing

As already shown in the previous chapter commercial marketing approaches did not imply the sustainability concept at all. But companies of the 21st century cannot ignore anymore the change of society and the constant growing of media and NGOs' attention as well as the

consumers' requests related to sustainability. The question arises for marketing departments how to combine the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainability and communicate this to its consumers.

The following part shows some definitions of sustainability marketing. The first one defines sustainability marketing as *“the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers in such a way that both natural and human capital are preserved or enhanced throughout”* (Martin, & Schouten, 2014, p.8). Belz and Peattie point out that *“Sustainability marketing is planning, organizing, implementing and controlling marketing resources and programmes to satisfy consumers' wants and needs, while considering social and environmental criteria and meeting corporate objectives”* (2012, p.31). Both definitions show the sustainable value, which satisfies the consumers' requests and at the same time ensure that all parts of the company's consumption activities do not disregard and ignore the boundaries of the sustainability pillars. But according to Belz and Peattie (2019) it is also important to underline that sustainability marketing is in contrast to green marketing and has not the objective of developing new products, rather creating a more sustainability awareness, what asks for more radical solutions (as cited in Rosemeier, 2015). This statement emphasises the actual concept and role of sustainability marketing. Sustainability marketing is by far more than just implementing sustainable products and promoting these ones, rather a tool to change the situation as a whole. The citation underlines that more radical solutions are asked for, so sustainability marketing is an action and not reaction anymore.

One can see that sustainability marketing is not a complete new invention of marketing, the main goal for companies is still implementing a business strategy so the customers' satisfaction and the corporation's goals are reached. The only difference, or better said the add-on, is that sustainability marketing is focusing also on the social and environmental issues the nowadays mass industry evokes.

2.2.4 The four C's of sustainability marketing

Belz and Peattie (2012) bring forward that with the change of the world of marketing and industry the original marketing mix model known as the four P's (price, place, promotion, product) has to be changed into the *four C's of marketing*. Shimizu created the first version of the four C's in year 1973, which originally included commodity, cost, channel and communication.

New challenges appear for the world of marketing like the transformation towards a focus on customer relationships and the defiance to build a relationship between marketing strategies and the principles of the sustainable development. In the traditional marketing mix, the viewpoint is from the companies and the consumers are not seen as actual part of the business. The four P's of marketing show a one-way process meaning that all the action and communication comes from the sellers. But with the change to sustainability marketing a two-way system is needed and the focus on customer relationship and sustainable development has to increase. Hence, Lauterborn developed in year 1993 the second and now known *four C's marketing model* (as cited in Rosemeier, 2015).

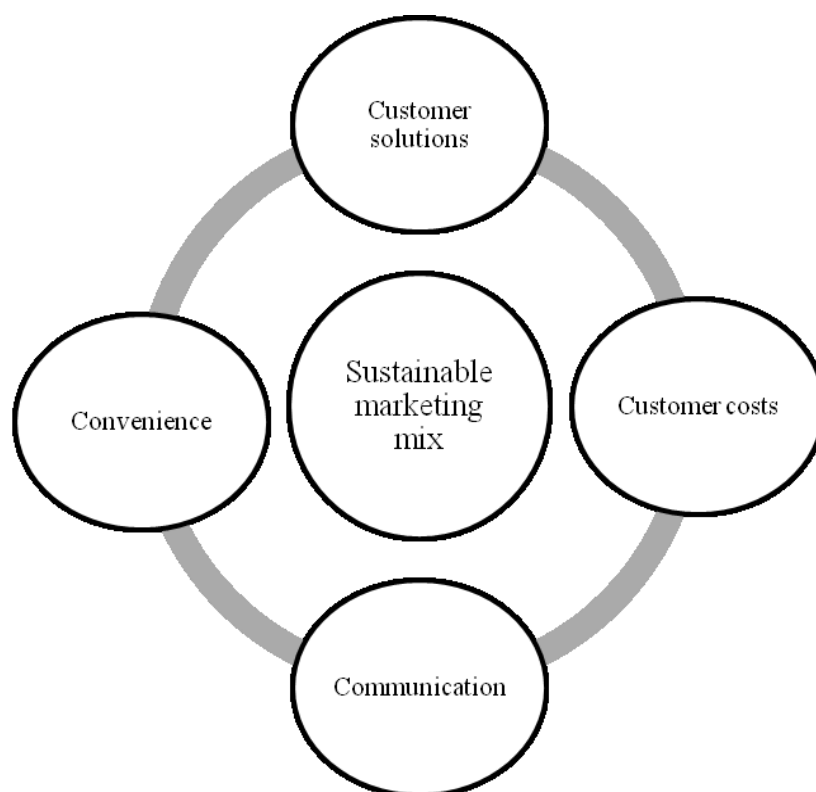


Figure 3. The four 4 C's of marketing (Rosemeier, 2015, p.14).

As you can see in figure three, the sustainable marketing mix maintains the four elements of a marketing mix, but sets the attention on other topics. The author will define closer the four C's of marketing as followed.

Customer solutions:

The first C “customer solutions” takes the part of the first P “product”. In the sustainability marketing mix it is not anymore just about simply selling a product it is rather about focusing

on the satisfaction of the customers' needs and involving the consumers into the products/service creation. Companies have to take into account the customer requests as well as socio-ecological problems (Belz & Peattie, 2010). An important aspect is according to Belz and Peattie (2009) that the most important characteristic of a sustainable product or service is the satisfaction of the consumers' needs, without that a product or service will not have a long-run existence on the market (as cited in Rosemeier, 2015).

Customer costs:

According to Belz and Peattie (2009) it is important to focus not just on the price for a good or service, it is also important to take into account the social, psychological and environment costs which appear by obtaining, using and disposing a product (as cited in Rosemeier, 2015). Customers are going in the direction to spend money for lifetime-products and also focus on the sustainability aspect of purchasing a product.

Convenience:

In Lauterborn's sustainability marketing mix "convenience" replaces "place" of the traditional marketing mix. The focus of the business shifted from how to manage inventory to the goal to make purchasing a good/ service convenient for consumers. Businesses should offer their consumers more payment choices and shipping options. Belz and Peattie (2010) emphasise that convenience is one of the most important facts for customers what may influence their buying behaviour.

Communication:

The commercial one-way promotion is not enough anymore, organisations have to focus on the so-called two-way communication and include their customers. For sustainability marketers communication is the most important part of a good working marketing strategy. An effective communication performance is a big benefit for companies to assure the consumers' awareness of corporations' sustainability solutions (Belz & Peattie, 2010). This statement shows that a marketing strategy without an optimal communication is not enough. Hence, the challenge for companies is to create communication and promote their products in a way that their consumers are fully satisfied, and to consider the social, environmental and the economic aspects. Based on the sustainability development, corporations have to implement an optimal internal and external communication. Supporting and motivating the employees' sustainable behaviour, building sustainability supported management and

communicating sustainability within the entire corporation departments is the base for an optimal external communication. In this thesis the research focus will be on the external CSR-communication.

2.3 CSR - communication

According to Moravcikova, Stefanikova and Rypakova (2015), communicating CSR activities enables a company to inform its customers about social responsibility related issues and about the company's and product's values. This chapter conceptualises CSR-communication. As in the previous parts of the literature review already defined, communication still plays a crucial role in the business strategy. As this thesis focuses on the CSR-communication of outdoor brands it is important to give an overview of its concept and define it.

2.3.1 Definition and framework of CSR-communication

Communication, the centrepiece of marketing, is one of the biggest challenges for companies' marketing departments. Marketing communication, internal and external have to be well conceived because this is how corporations present their mission, product or service to their staff and even more important to their customers. A known definition of marketing communication says "*marketing communication is a management process through which an organisation enters into a dialogue with its various audiences*" (Fill, 2012, p.12). The objective of marketing communication is to create behavioural responses by the customers and to (re)position the corporation with its product or service on the target market (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Through marketing communication organisations make the first contact to their customers thus it is importance for organisations to create an optimal communication strategy, which evokes customer satisfaction. The main objective of companies in the 21st century is to be successful and survive in the today's fast growing marketing environment (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

It is important to take a closer look and demonstrate the concept of CSR-communication and why today's companies implement it. Gray et al. (1987) says that CSR-communication is the tool of corporations to inform their stakeholders about the integration of social and environmental issues into the core business and processes (as cited in Fryzel, 2015). There are two types of communication, the internal and external communication. According to Cheney and Christensen (2001, p.231), internal communication is "*employee relations, statements of mission and organizational development*". Another definition, coined by Bovée and Thill concludes that internal communication is "*the exchange of information and ideas within an organization*" (2000, p.7). At the end, both definitions implicate the same. Internal communication plays a big role within a business and is the main tool for informing all

corporation departments about ongoing processes, changing goals and keeping the whole staff pulling together.

The external communication is even a more important communication element as it is the main tool of corporations to create a connection to its customers and building or keeping the brand's identity. By communicating to the outside customers become aware of products and services and this is one of the main tasks of corporations, building up brand awareness.

According to Moravcikova et al. (2015) a regular CSR-communication can bring various advantages for a company, what are transparency, supervision of CSR activities, involvement of stakeholders and cross-sector cooperation. A corporation's transparency towards its customers evokes an increased awareness of the brand's CSR activities and ensures corporate transparency. An optimal supervision of a company's CSR activities enables a public company comparison and the involvement of stakeholders improves the stakeholders' position and involvement in company decisions. The fourth advantage, the cross-sector cooperation, strengthens the correlation between businesses, government agencies and NGOs.

This thesis analyses the external communication of outdoor apparel brands, hence the following part will define more precisely the so-called external CSR-communication.

“Do good things and talk about it on every communication channel” the main motto in the communication of sustainability marketing (Heinrich, 2013, p.2; own translation). A correct, reasonable and target group adequate communication of the corporations' CSR activities is expected from the nowadays consumers. Here the question arises what are the good things companies can do and about what should they talk.

As already defined in chapter 2.1.1, CSR plays a big role in nowadays companies and is important to be integrated in the core business. This part of the thesis will build the framework how to communicate CSR and what possibilities do corporations have. As already mentioned in traditional marketing promotion is the communication part that means for companies was just important to advertise products or services to consumers in the most efficient and profitable way. In the traditional marketing mix was no relationship between consumers and the company, it was just the corporation “talking”. This is not the purpose of CSR-communication. CSR-communication, and especially the external one, becomes more and more important for business processes and its operations (Gligor-Cimpoieru, & Munteanu, 2014). Today's world of business is defined by less stability and predictability, a constant growing competition market and various stakeholders with high expectations and an

increasing need for corporations' transparency. Hence the goal is to create consumers' brand awareness by communicating their CSR activities.

Nowadays there are several channels used for the external CSR-communication what the following table defines:

Table 1. *CSR-communication instruments (own chart; based on Heinrich, 2013, p.82).*

Corporate social responsibility			
<u>Media work</u>	<u>Publications</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Events</u>
• Press mailing list	• CR-/ Sustainability report	• Corporation's website	• Stakeholder dialogue
• Professional articles		• Online press portal	• Roadshows
• Press information	• Newsletter	• Social media	• Trade fairs
• Press pictures	• CR topics in consumer magazines	• Podcast/ videos	• Event calendar
• Press conferences	• PR releases		
• Interviews			

There are various instruments for external CSR-communication as you can see in table one. One of the most common and official communication-instrument is the CR-report, also called sustainability report. It provides all stakeholders information about corporations' supply chains, production conditions, manufactures and environmental data. Important is to say, that it is almost impossible to separate all these communication tools, corporations show CSR reports, press releases or videos related to their CSR activities also on their website.

2.3.2 Building brand equity by CSR-communication

In the today's world of business, business reputation is often more depended on the organisation's core position than on its actual products or services (Karaosmanoglu, Altinigne & Isiksal, 2016). Some consumer see companies as their lifelong partner, thus, they evaluate the brand's value not only by the brand's products or services, also by its actions (Karaosmanoglu et al., 2016). That is why consumers take into account the communication of the company's CSR activities.

One of the biggest business challenges is to build the optimal *brand equity* within the increasing market competition. The term brand equity has been used a lot to express the strength of a brand and to define its situation on the market (Beech, & Chadwick, 2007; Bouchet, Hillairet, & Bodet, 2013). According to Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) brand equity demonstrates a multi-dimensional concept that includes environmentally sensitive and contrasts across different contexts (as cited in Biscaia, Ross, Yoshida, Correia, Rosado, & Marôco, 2016). Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as a combination of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand asset, whereas Keller (1993) conceptualises customer-based brand equity contains brand awareness and brand image (as cited in Biscaia et al., 2016).

The *brand image* is the flagship on the market and has an immense influence on the consumers' purchase behaviour. Simply said, a brand is an attribute that helps consumers to differentiate organisation's products or services from their competitors (Ferrand, & McCarthy, 2009). But according to Ferrand and Torrigiani (2004) a brand is much more than just a differentiation tool for consumers. Organisational brands create a relationship between corporation and consumers. For consumers the two corporation components products or services and the brand itself are inseparable. According to Kapferer (2003) consumers associate their purchasing behaviour to the brands providing insurance over product origins and quality (as cited in Bouchet et al., 2013). This points out the significance of organisations to provide their consumers transparency and credibility by communicating e.g. their production processes, community foundations and employees care.

With the rapid growth of international competitions and the constantly development of new brands the main objectives for companies is to create and keep the status of an optimal brand identity. Several researches in the branding field define the brand identity as a jigsaw puzzle, which includes the following three components: associated product or services, the relationship with consumers and the social role of brand (Ferrand, & McCarthy, 2009). Both previous defined concept of brand equity by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), point out that brand awareness and brand loyalty are an important influence on brand equity. While brand awareness is the consumers' capability to identify a brand within the competitive surrounding, brand loyalty is the brand's ability to attract consumers and keep the connection consumers have to the brand (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Both categories define the relationship of a consumer to a brand. While brand awareness reflects the buyers' recognition towards a brand and the ability to build a link to a certain product or service category, brand loyalty defines

the consumers' attachment and commitment to a certain brand. And as the consumers' purchase behaviour is the most important survival tool for a company, corporations have to create an optimal brand identity. As already mentioned in the previous chapter according to the increasing consumer requests for product transparency organisations are forced to create and keep the status of an optimal brand reputation by credibility. Emrich (2015) points exactly that out and says a corporation's credibility and brand reputation increases by providing transparency. Hence because of the nowadays society needs, companies have to create brand differentiation by CSR-communication and an optimal differentiation strategy helps improving the brand awareness and loyalty of consumers. Important for creating an optimal CSR-communication is that companies should see all their business operations and products/service as part of the society, so corporations should also take in consideration to change the consumers' buying behaviour.

The following table two shows how the corporations' communication behaviour and the focus of building brand awareness have changed caused by the development of commercial marketing to sustainability marketing.

Table 2. *Characteristics of the different marketing approaches (Belz, 2001, p.90).*

Commercial marketing	Eco – marketing	Sustainability marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costumer focused • Consumption boosting • Support of the disposable society • Encouragement of environment- and litter problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costumer focused • Consumption boosting • Environmentalism as dominant differentiation • Market-niche oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costumer focused • Boosting of sustainable consumption behaviour • Consideration of socio-ecological and environmental core problems

As one can see in table two all three types of marketing have in common that the customers are the heart of any company. As already mentioned in chapter 2.2.4 without customer satisfaction the business is not able to survive in the economy. Hence this marketing objective should never change. Interesting is the power of corporations leading their customers' consumption behaviour. While the traditional and eco-marketing tend to increase the consumers' amount of consumption, the sustainability marketing approach focuses to create sustainable consumption behaviour. This is an immense change in the world of business, as

the sustainable consumption behaviour is a step away from mass production and consumption. Companies that implement the sustainability marketing communication lead their customers' attention of buying long-term products and recycling. As you can also see in table two the brand differentiation shifts slowly away from being dependent on products or service quality and quantity, and focuses in contrast on image differentiation by supporting and communicating environmentalism. The sustainability marketing approach even goes one step further and takes socio-ecological and environmental in consideration as a whole.

The following figure four shows the eight goals of external CSR-communication, which support building optimal brand awareness.

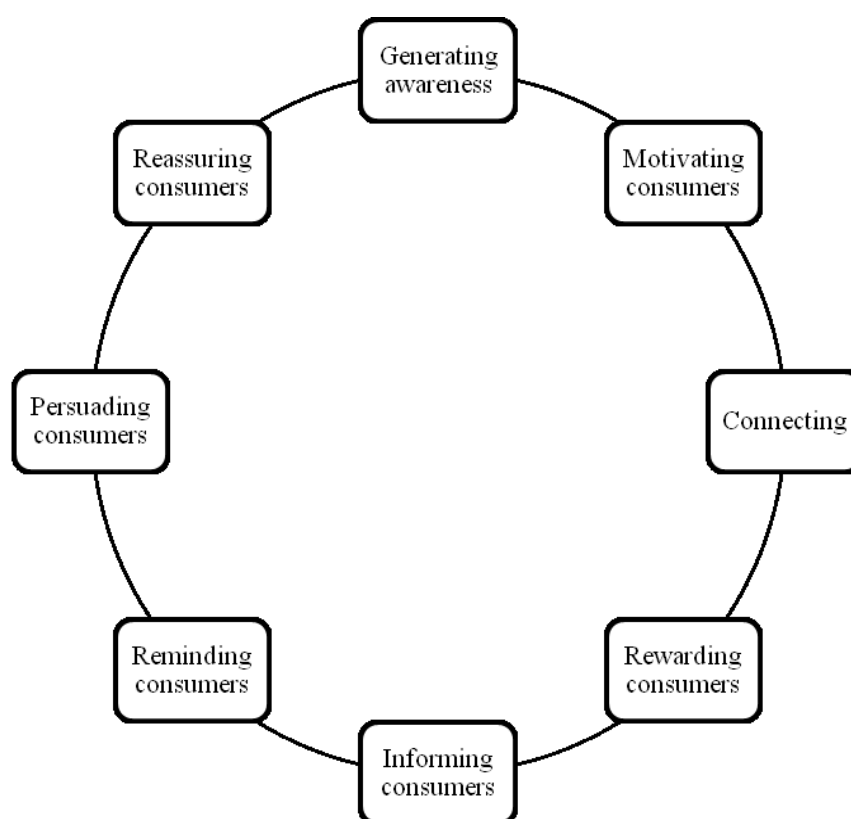


Figure 4. External CSR-communication goals (Rosemeier, 2015, p.16).

Generating awareness can be considered as one of the key factors that prohibit the development of more sustainable products. In the nowadays fast-moving markets it is necessary to extent the sustainable consumption behaviour among the society and to establish consumers' trust and brand awareness, as already mentioned in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, motivating and connecting have the objective to engage the consumers' attention not just on sustainable buying behaviour, also on interacting and responding to different marketing actions.

The objective informing consumers is based on the concept of brand transparency, as explained previous. Companies have to inform their consumers by creating an insight to the business supply chain and enable a knowledge exchange about sustainability issues and their correlations to the consumers' daily life (Rose, Dade, & Scott, 2007).

The four efforts of rewarding, reminding, persuading and reassuring the consumers represent the tasks of corporations to inform and lead their customers' attention on products' availability, durability and on purchasing more for sustainable products. E.g. various corporations inform the consumers more and more about product care which assures a long-term use and give the possibilities of recycling and repairing products. This is a big step forward and increases the sustainable consumption behaviour (Belz & Peattie, 2012).

2.3.3 Sustainability oriented marketing strategies

Nowadays corporations take advantage of social and ecological potentials of sustainability for improving their competition strategy and their economic acting (Emrich, 2015). Hence there is still no optimal framework and definition of sustainability competition strategies but Gminder (2002) and Dyllick et al (1997) define five types of sustainability competition strategies what the following figure five shows (as cited in Emrich, 2015).

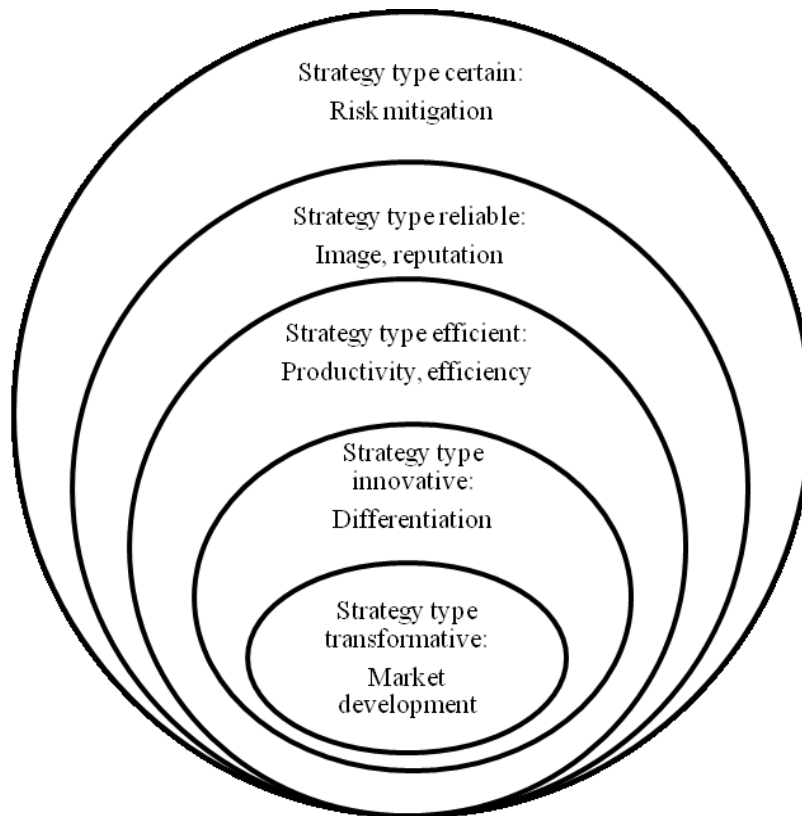


Figure 5. Sustainability oriented competition strategies (Emrich, 2015, p.175).

The following part will define the different strategy types, which are built on a data base of 400 interviews within 80 corporations from different branches (Emrich, 2015).

Strategy type certain:

The main goal of this strategy is minimizing the risks that could compromise the corporation's reputation. Most of the time this strategy is implemented as a reaction to societal changes and media attention. By this strategy type risk mitigation systems are implemented in all three dimensions of the TBL. Third-party verifications, reduction of toxins in the production and new product requirements like taking back or recycling products are implemented. Based on the increasing global pressure on sustainability justification of corporations, this strategy type was proofed empirical and can be defined as the "entrance-strategy" of sustainability (Emrich, 2015).

Strategy type reliable:

This strategy focuses, like the strategy type "certain", on protection against reputation risks, like greenwashing, as well as on building positive sustainability oriented reputation.

Greenwashing is quite hard to identify by external persons. An important part of this strategy is the internal as well as external business communication. Internal it is focused on the motivation of employees and external on its stakeholders and society, as already defined previously. An important fact is that corporations build a positive brand image.

Strategy type efficient:

The main goal of this sustainability strategy is the increase of sustainable productivity that means this strategy focuses on internal business processes and its supply chain. The task is to act as most ecological efficient as possible and minimizing the environment pollution.

Strategy type innovative:

This strategy focuses on competition differentiation with the help of ecological and social innovation of products or services. In comparison to the previous strategies this strategy is an offensive one. As the other strategies are defined as risk mitigation and minimizing negative reputation, the differentiation strategy focuses on competition advantage. The danger of this strategy is still the communication of false facts and the not existing standardisation of verifications, what leads to the greenwashing. For preventing this, companies implement third-party verifications helping consumers to verify the true facts. Villiger, Meyer and Wüstenhagen (2000) define three characteristics of the differentiation strategy which are moderate pricing, positive communication and active inclusion of politics and publicity in its marketing.

Strategy type transformative:

According to Dyllick (1997) *“the goal of the transformative ‘sustainability strategy’ is the sustainable development of markets by the active co-creation of restructuring of economy and society”* (as cited in Emrich, 2015, p.181; own translation). Corporations want to support the sustainable behaviour in its branch and to sanction environmentally harmful behaviour. This strategy is proactive and has both, the goal of differentiation and changing the branch as a whole.

By taking a closer look on the different sustainability marketing strategies the author summarizes these into two main types of groups related to the CSR-communication efforts. While strategy type certain, reliable and efficient are more passive and show a brand's reaction, the other two types demonstrate an active communication strategy. The main goals of the first three are risk mitigation, assuring a positive brand reputation and not allowing the

risk to implement greenwashing. The author summarises these three types in the business group “risk minimizer”. Strategy type innovative and transformative emphasise the goal of brand differentiation by CSR-communication. This group is named “differentiator” with the objectives of including CSR in the core business, building competitive advantage by communicating CSR activities and changing the market branch as a whole by putting pressure on all other competitors and publish constantly new sustainability discussions. The third group, not defined by the mentioned types will be defined as “deniers”, even if the pressure of the nowadays sustainable consumer behaviour, NGOs and press releases is high, some companies still focus on brand differentiation by traditional marketing communication and show no participation in CSR efforts.

2.3.4 CSR-communication on corporate websites

As already demonstrated in chapter 2.3.1 there are various external communication tools whereas this thesis will focus on the CSR-communication of outdoor brands’ websites. Corporations have many different opinions about an effective CSR-communication to their consumers. While some companies focus on their CSR-communication in shops, other build an optimal communication tool by big advertisement campaigns and others by communicating their CSR activities on the corporate’s website. The literature points out that the Internet recognises an immense increasing importance in the nowadays communication world. Many researches emphasise that business websites are on the way to become a key communication tool between companies and their consumers (e.g., Heidinger, 2012). The reason is that the Internet gives the opportunity to combine various communication arenas and increase the communication speed what ensures higher interaction and a broader exposure to stakeholders (Emrich, 2015; Liu, 2015). Müller and Chandon (2004) say that using websites as CSR-communication tool can influence the consumers’ perception towards brands (as cited in Heidinger, 2012). Nowadays consumers ask corporations to communicate their CSR activities on corporates’ websites. That is why corporates’ website takes a core role in the business process, and through this platform, consumers have the opportunity to get their requested business transparency and corporations are able to provide background business information (Emrich, 2015).

While analysing the CSR-communication on corporates' websites it is important to take into account the following aspects, which will be included to the author's research (Heinrich, 2013; Butow, 2014):

- Website includes extra part for CSR
- Corporation communicates CR-report on website
- Management declarations related to corporation's CSR efforts
- Corporation communicates fair labour rights, employees' responsibility, environment protection and social responsibility
- Website includes extra CR-blog
- Connection to social media (Facebook, YouTube-channel, etc.)
- Corporation communicates third-party verifications
- Corporation communicates CR awards
- Advertising of take back or recycling programs
- Information about environmental-friendly materials

2.4 The outdoor industry

The outdoor industry is a multibillion industry, which includes apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories (Cobb, 2015). In Europe, it is represented by the *European Outdoor Group* (EOG) and in America by the *Outdoor Industry Association* (OIA) and is in comparison to other industries quite a young branch. But in the last decade this industry has recognised an immense growth, especially in countries like Germany, USA and Scandinavia (Emrich, 2015). The EOG was founded in 2003 and is an association that represents around 50 companies with the common interests to protect and support the European outdoor industry. According to previous research of the EOG, the outdoor industry has experienced in 2014 a growth of 1.2% in value and 1.4% in volume. In 2015 the industry grew even more, with an overall value of €4.83 billion and a growth of 2.1% in value and 1.7% in volume (EOG, 2016). The OIA was founded in 1989 is a trade association and the voice of the outdoor industry. In the USA, the outdoor industry drives every year \$646 billion in retail sales and services.

The EOG has the following definition of the outdoor market: “*outdoor products includes performance and lifestyle products from specialist outdoor companies traditionally linked to activities such as hiking, trekking, climbing, mountaineering, and camping*” (Gilbride, Gierke, & Dzurik, 2014, p.5). By its definition the outdoor industry demonstrates the flagship for the direct link to the nature, as its products equip their consumers for spending time in nature.

As already mentioned, the outdoor industry had an immense growth during the last years. One of the main reasons for this positive change is that outdoor clothes and equipment are increasingly used by consumers’ also during their daily life. Hiking, climbing, surfing, skiing are just a few outdoor sports which become more and more popular in the nowadays society. Even the immense weather changes and challenging market conditions could not stop the outdoor industry of growing and became a multi-billion dollar business during the last decade (EOG, 2016). Russel (2016) gives the statement: “*While the next few years may be challenging for the outdoor performance apparel industry, increases participation in outdoor experiences is expected to lead to retail sales growth of over 20% till 2020...*”. All these data, expert statements and press releases suggest that the outdoor industry has recognised an immense increase and is still on track. Nevertheless, it still has to deal with the challenging adjustment caused by the sustainable development.

2.4.1 Definition of outdoor brand

In chapter 2.3.2 was defined what role the term “brand” means for corporations, and in the outdoor industry it has the same meaning, the flagship of a company. As the outdoor industry represents a sector in the sports industry, outdoor brands are included into the area of sport brands. According to Bouchet et al. (2013) the various sport brands can be clarified in three main categories: classical brands, sport-specific brands, and certification, and label brands. Outdoor brands are defined as corporate brands, which are a sub-category of classical brands. The main characteristic of corporate brands is that *“the name of a company has constituted the main recognition sign for a brand, and then identifies the corporate brand”* (Bouchet et al, 2013, p.14). The name of corporate brands represents often the founder or the company’s foundation place, signifies an historical background or represents an important value of the company. In the outdoor industry, there are various brands that show one of these characteristics. The brand *Hell Hansen* for example has the name of its founder, the name of the company *Marmot* refers to a group of highly social, large ground squirrels that live in mountainous areas or the outdoor brand *The North Face* is named after one of the most dangerous mountain chains. Consequently, one can define the outdoor apparel brand as a classical corporate brand, which manufactures and sells outdoor clothing, footwear, equipment and outdoor associated accessories.

2.4.2 Current situation of CSR-communication in the outdoor industry

CSR and the outdoor industry have a significant characteristic in common - both of them experience an immense growth and boom during the last years. Rodewald (2015) states, that, according to sustainability issues, the outdoor industry is already a step ahead in comparison to the fashion industry. This emphasises how the sustainability awareness trend is from big importance in the outdoor industry. Already the previous chapter 2.4 identified that the outdoor industry creates already by its definition and clientele a direct link to nature and environment (Dalsant, 2015). For many outdoor companies, CSR is already the main topic in its business strategy and communication, e.g. the brand Patagonia, known as the outdoor clothing company with a revolutionary approach to CSR and sustainability (CSR-central, 2015). *“Arguably, consumers but also employees and suppliers are increasingly sensitive to brands ethical commitments and practices”* (Bouchet et al, 2013, p.117). Bouchet’s statement is also present in the outdoor industry and shows that the significant sustainable development

in the outdoor industry is not by chance. Also, according to Bouchet et al. (2013) brands which want to survive in their market and assure their reputation and relationship to their consumers, have to implement communication programmes which include the brands' concerns associated to their impact on society, environment and on individuals as well as showing effort to act as a good citizen. Factors like citizenship, fair trade, and social and environmental responsibility play a crucial role in the corporations' communication messages. Another impulse for outdoor brands communicating their CSR activities is the increased receiving enquiries for used materials and the corporations' supply chains. Another statement by Schmid, former CEO of *Mammut Sport Group* is *"sustainability related to an ecologic and social level in the outdoor-world – based on public critics - will be more and more thematised and continually improved"* (as cited in Becher, 2015). This citation focuses not only on the consumers' buying behaviour, but public attention as a whole. The outdoor industry experiences immense pressure from the increasing competition, the stakeholders, various NGOs, press releases and sustainability campaigns like the "Detox campaign" which was launched 2011 by *Greenpeace*¹ force the exposé of direct links between global clothing brands and their suppliers (Vilimaviciute, 2013).

The CSR movement in the outdoor industry is an ongoing process and every year at least one of the new trends pushes the industry on the importance of CSR, from cleaner production, to environmental energy use and social responsibility, the whole range. Also, various studies show that sustainable clothes are more and more requested by sports consumers (Fritzen, 2017).

As already defined in chapter 2.2.1 an important aspect of CSR is the TBL, which demonstrates the corporations' responsibilities towards people, planet and profit. Chouinard and Stanley (2012) describe in their book the five responsibilities outdoor companies should assume:

Responsibility to the health of the business:

Every company has to focus primary on their financial health. A business cannot be social and environmentally responsible without being financially solid and able to grow. It is true, on the accounting papers the costs of nature and its commons do not appear but you cannot forget

¹ Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace.

that by using arbitrarily natural resources, the industrial world, the consumers and whole society slowly suffers. This is equivalent to the first bottom line “profit”.

Responsibility to nature:

“Our economy depends on nature, not the other way around, and companies will destroy the economy if they destroy nature” (Chouinard, & Stanley, 2012, p.82). This citation defines the reality of the industrial world and cannot be ignored. During the decades of industrial development companies were spoiled from the amount of natural resources they could use. But as the words of Chouinard and Stanley (2012) demonstrate, the economy needs the nature and not the other way around. In the outdoor industry, even more. The outdoor brands are dependent on their consumers, who want to spend time in the nature, which in turn makes the consumers also dependent on the environment. The corporation’s responsibility to nature defines the second bottom line called “planet”.

Responsibility to the workers:

The industrial revolution spread the world of production and sale all over the world. Companies moved their production into countries with lower worker seller and got the possibility to sell their products easily around the world. The labour and workers’ conditions lost their importance and safety that is why associations like the *Fair Labour Association* (FLA) and *Fair Wear Foundation* (FWF) arisen and fight since years for better working conditions all over the world. In the outdoor industry, it has become a “must be” to be a member of association like mentioned.

Responsibility to your customers:

CR-reports, different sustainability certifications, corporate websites and many more tools allow businesses to communicate their responsibilities to their consumers. In the 21st century companies are forced to accept the responsibility towards their costumer. In their book Chouinard and Stanley (2012) say that corporations have to inform the customers about the environmental and social issues of a product or service, and this through the entire supply chain, the purchasing moment and forward.

Responsibility to the community:

In the outdoor industry it is also important that companies do not forget the neighbourhood of the cities they operate. Also the company’s ambassadors, all the outdoor enthusiasts, who are

the company's customers, and any other outdoor associations are important for outdoor brands.

The last three defined responsibilities describe the third bottom line “people”, which represent the corporations' employees, customers and community as a whole.

To sum up, the current situation of CSR-communication in the outdoor industry is a global trend and pushes towards more CSR efforts. The increasing competition in the outdoor industry, related to innovation, quality improvement and also better CSR-communication efforts, forces the different brands to move forward continuously. So outdoor brands are expected to commit themselves to social and environmental causes and communicate these. To be able to be purchased by their consumers, also corporations in the outdoor industry should develop a clean or green image.

2.4.3 The purchasing behaviour of outdoor products consumers

Several studies analysed the willingness of customers to purchase sustainable products. One important study says that consumers are willing to provide bigger support for corporations, which show social and environment responsibility (Sen, & Bhattacharya, 2001). Furthermore according to Andreu et al. (2015) previous studies show that a company's CSR activities influence consumers' brand perception and thus the consumers' purchasing behaviour. The question arises if these results are also visible in the outdoor industry.

The outdoor brand Patagonia is known for its radical advertisement campaigns as already mentioned in chapter 2.4.1. In 2011 Patagonia started the first shining out campaign. With “*Don't buy this jacket*” the corporation leads the actual idea of the consumption society in a complete other direction. Patagonia makes the society rethink is actually needed and that products are made for reusing and repairing. Traditional marketers would think that this campaign would decrease the brand's revenue immense, but the contrary has happened. By this campaign Patagonia has generated an increase from 2011 to 2012 by \$158million in revenue (Stock, 2013). In winter 2016 Patagonia advertises with a new slogan “*100% for the planet*” and announces to give the *Black Friday* sales as a whole directly to grassroots non-profits. Through this campaign Patagonia has reached a total of \$10 million in sale what is record-breaking (Marcario, 2016). These data show that the sustainable buying behaviour has

also reached the outdoor brand industry. The outdoor industry recognises that outdoor product consumers put an increased importance on less use of resources and more implementation of sustainable business processes. At the international trade fair for sporting goods and sportswear in Munich (2017) experts said: “*Whether sport professionals, athletes or amateur sportsmen and women: almost everyone places great importance on a less intensive use of resources and sustainable production methods*”. But outdoor brands still have the challenge to satisfy their customers by product quality and durability.

2.4.4 The role of certification and label brands

According to Kwon, Englis and Mann (2016) environmental and sustainability concerns have recognised an immense increasing in the last years, what led companies more and more to provide sustainable products. For proving these issues, companies use third-party verifications from independent organisations or even create their own eco-label.

Chouinard and Stanley (2012) state that communicating CSR engagement, and by this creating business transparency and credibility, will benefit every company. In the previous chapters it was pointed out that the external pressure on outdoor companies is asking exactly this from outdoor brands, transparency and credibility towards all stakeholders, hence the question arises how outdoor brands’ consumers have the possibility to create a brand awareness based on the company’s sustainability performance. That is why outdoor brands use more and more so-called label brands as verification tool. “*Label brand designate the labelling system used by companies, ... intended for consumers and society at large to show that some products, services and brands conform to certain standards which can be ethical, ecological, high quality or technological*” (Bouchet et al, 2013, p.27). Especially ethical and environmental labels are used as communication tool by outdoor brands. A lot of labels are associated to NGOs that help companies to win more credibility and avoid to be claimed for greenwashing. But outdoor brands are also members of NGOs that are working on ecological and social sustainability. Worldwide exist around more than 1000 NGOs which are addressing renewable energy, women’s health, climate change, wilderness and nature protection, trade laws and much more (Chouinard, 2006). Therefore, more and more outdoor brands are encouraged to support NGOs, donation campaigns or even create own foundations.

There are various NGOs and third-party labels related to the CSR performance within the outdoor brand industry. Some will be introduced in this chapter.

Fair Wear Foundation (FWF, 2017):

FWF is a non-profit organisation and verifies and improves labour conditions in eleven production countries in Asia, Europe and Africa. Nowadays FWF has more than 80 members, represents around 120 brands worldwide and works with brands, factories and other NGOs. The NGO stands behind fully transparency of outdoor brands' supply chain and implements every year various verification processes, which allow outdoor brands to communicate their CSR efforts on a credible base.

Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC, 2017):

SAC is the alliance for sustainable production within the apparel, footwear and home textile industry. It was founded in 2009 together with the brands Patagonia and Walmart under the mission: *“Collect peers and competitors across the apparel, footwear and textile sector and together, develop a universal approach to measuring sustainability performance”* (SAC, 2017). By SAC an important assessment tool for the sustainability performance of outdoor brands was born, the so-called *Higg-Index*, which helps companies to verify their supply chain processes in an official way.

Bluesign® system:

Bluesign® system was founded in 2000 with headquarters in Switzerland and is an official third-party verification among the textile industry. The goal of bluesign system is to unite suppliers, manufactures and brands to reduce the impact on people and the environment and promote a healthy awareness within the textile industry.

Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS):

GOTS belongs to the globally leading standard for textiles made out of organically natural fibres. It was found in 2005 by a collaboration of various international organisations with the focus on environmental friendly and social responsible textile industry.

Responsible Down Standard (RDS):

RDS is an independent and till today a voluntary standard. The objective of the RDS is to ensure the consumers that the feathers, used for outdoor jackets, come from ducks and geese that were treated well.

All these verifications and associations show that the outdoor textile industry is on the way to create a common sustainability performance. But it is still a long way to create an official verification valid for all outdoor brands. Vucurevic, founder and CEO of *Braind* says with the trend to sustainability and all outdoor brands trying to create an honest brand some jackets would look “*like a Christmas tree*” (as cited in Thieringer, 2017). The problem is that there is no rule about outdoor brands’ labelling. Every outdoor brand can create its own label without any third-party verification process. According to Vucurevic (2017), nowadays it is not enough anymore for outdoor companies to communicate individual sustainable products without implementing sustainability into the business commitment (as cited in Thieringer, 2017).

2.4.5 Patagonia – the pioneer of sustainable companies

As already previous chapters point out, the outdoor brand *Patagonia* is known in the sustainable world of business. Various literature and media releases describe Patagonia as the pioneer related to the sustainable development in the outdoor industry (CSR-central, 2015; Chouinard, 2006). “*Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, and use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis*” (Patagonia, 2017). The brand stands behind its business philosophy which is anchored in all business departments. Employees care, fair labour, environmental protection, various donation campaigns, sustainable product design, all these business elements are based on the business founder Yvon Chouinard. Radical advertising campaigns, as already mentioned in chapter 2.4.3, and active pushing of sustainability issues in the outdoor industry belong to the daily business processes of Patagonia. But why is Patagonia so known for its CSR activities? The answer is quite simple because the company follows the objective of CSR-communication: “*Do good things and talk about it on every communication channel*” (s.ch.2.3.1). It is obvious that Patagonia manages to create brand differentiation by CSR-communication.

3. Purpose and framework of the research

The previous literature review shows the complexity of CSR and its influence of companies' marketing and especially communication strategies. There is a recognisable change and development happening in the nowadays world of business what leads organisations slowly towards implementing CSR-communication activities. Especially in the outdoor industry, just by its definition (s.ch.2.4), outdoor brands cannot ignore the direct link to nature, environment and society.

Previous studies already analysed the link between sustainability or CR and the outdoor industry. The Analysis of Dalsant (2015) focuses on CR, especially philanthropy in the European outdoor industry. Dalsant has interviewed six European outdoor companies with the aim to analyse the companies CR-projects and the role of marketing for companies related to CR. In his conclusion the author emphasises that marketing especially the communication of CR plays a crucial role but did not take a closer look on this topic.

Another study conducted by Butow (2014) analyses the sustainability issues and strategies in the outdoor apparel brand industry. The author uses a benchmark tool for analysing the general sustainability awareness of outdoor brands and their communicating of apparel life cycle in their corporates' websites. For the research Butow used 14 outdoor brands, all associated to SAC and OIA.

Furthermore, Gilbride et al. (2014) analysed the sustainability engagement of outdoor brands towards their consumers, the business and society. The authors have also interviewed 14 different outdoor brands, manufactures and trade associations. But this study focuses on the internal sustainability processes of outdoor brands.

Based on the literature review and former studies the author comes to the following research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: *Which role does CSR-engagement play nowadays for outdoor brands?*

RQ 2: *Is sustainability marketing implemented by outdoor brands?*

RQ 3: *Due to the CSR-communication on outdoor brands' website, is it possible to identify the three sustainability-oriented marketing strategies?*

The purpose of this study is to analyse, how outdoor brands see the current CSR situation in the outdoor industry, especially the role of sustainability marketing and CSR-communication.

Furthermore, this study will take a closer look on the CSR-communication on the corporate's websites and analyses the current situation CSR-communication of the analysed outdoor brands in total and will put these results in comparison with the brand differentiation strategy of the brand *Patagonia*, as it is known for implementing CSR-communication as differentiation strategy.

4. Methodology

The following chapter will provide the framework for the research, what is divided into two parts.

4.1 Data sample

According to the research participants the author divided the introduction of the analysed brands into the representative research parts. As the interviews were conducted with four companies, which stay completely anonymous and for the analysis the author consulted 22 different outdoor brands, which will be introduced in the following chapters.

4.1.1 Interviews

The interviews were conducted with four different companies, which stay anonymous. The data clarification can be found in appendix (s. appendix A for the complete proof). For providing a complete anonymity the brands' names and interviewees will be replaced by the representative letters A, B, C and D.

In total, four different outdoor companies were interviewed which were represented by one CEO, two CR-managers and one PR- and communication-manager. The companies advocate three outdoor brands and one interviewee an outdoor brand as well as manufacture for other sports brands.

4.1.2 Online analysis

The sample of the second research part includes 22 different large sized outdoor brands that are all members of the EOG. For providing an international comparison, the author did not focus on only one country or continent, the 22 brand represent outdoor brands headquartered in Europe and in the US. The following table five introduces the analysed companies:

Table 3. *List of analysed outdoor brands (source: own chart, based on brands' websites).*

Brand	Foundation	Headquarter	Parent company/ affiliated companies	Products
Arc'teryx	1989	Vancouver, Canada		Outdoor apparel and footwear, travel bags and climbing equipment
Bergans	1909	Hokksund, Norway	Affiliated companies in the US and Russia	Outdoor apparel and equipment, tents, sleeping bags and backpacks
Black Diamond, Inc.	1989	Utah, US		Outdoor apparel, climbing, hiking and skiing equipment
Columbia Sportswear	1938	Portland, US	Affiliated companies: Mountain Hardwear, Prana, Montrail, Sorel	Outdoor apparel and footwear
Fjällräven	1960	Ornskölvsik, Sweden	Parent company: Fenix outdoor group	Backpacks, tents, sleeping bags, outdoor apparel,
Haglöfs	1914	Avesta, Sweden	Parent company: Asics corporation	Outdoor apparel,
Helly Hansen	1877	Oslo, Norway		Marine clothing and accessories, outdoor apparel
Icebreaker	1994	Wellington, New Zealand		Merino wool outdoor and sports clothes
Jack Wolfskin	1981	Idstein, Germany	Parent company: Blackstone group	Functional clothing, outdoor apparel, equipment and footwear
Mammut Sports Group	1862	Seon, Switzerland	Parent company: Conzetta AG	Apparel and equipment for climbing, mountaineering, skiing and snowboarding

Marmot Mountain	1974	Santa Rosa, US	Parent company: Jarden corporation	Outdoor apparel, sleeping bags, tents and backpacks
Millet	1921	Annecy-le-Vieux, France	Parent company: Lafuma	Outdoor apparel and equipment
Mountain Equipment	1961	Cheshire, UK		Apparel and equipment for climbing, mountaineering and ski
Ortovox	1980	Munich, Germany	Parent company: Stabilo outdoor group	Outdoor apparel, avalanche backpacks
Patagonia, Inc.	1973	Ventura, California		Outdoor apparel and equipment
Prana	1992	California	Parent company: Columbia sportswear	Clothing for climbing, outdoor and Yoga
Rab	1980	Derbyshire, UK	Parent group: Rab and Lowe alpine group	Mountaineering clothing and sleeping bags
Salewa	1935	Bolzano, Italy	Parent company: Oberalp group	Outdoor apparel, footwear and equipment
Salomon	1947	Annecy, France	Parent company: Amer sports	Winter outdoor equipment, apparel and running footwear
Tatonka GmbH	1981	Dasing, Germany		Outdoor apparel, footwear, equipment and travel accessories
The North Face	1966	Alameda, California	Parent company: VF corporation	Outdoor apparel, equipment and footwear
Vaude Sport GmbH	1974	Tettnang, Germany		Outdoor apparel, equipment and backpacks

4.2 Instruments

For answering the three research questions the author conducted two different research types, which will be defined as follows.

4.2.1 Interviews

According to RQ 1 and RQ 2 a standardized open-end interview was conducted, what belongs under qualitative research methods. *“A standardized open ended interview consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words”* (Patton, 2002, p.342). The author decided to implement this interview type because it enables an increasing comparability of responses and all data and information are complete for the addressed interviewees. Furthermore it permits outsiders to see and review the implemented evaluation. From the respondents point of view a standardized open-end interview allows participants to talk more broadly about the asked topic (Dalsant, 2015).

The interview was developed by the author based on Emrich (2015) and Heinrich (2013), and is divided into four parts. The first part deals with general information about the companies' mission statements and the corporations' CSR definition what is followed by the second part analysing the CSR embedding within the different brands. The third part of the interview analyses the role of sustainability marketing, especially CSR-communication, for outdoor brands and the company classification which was defined in chapter 2.3.3. The interview finishes with a closer look at the brands' SWOT – Analysis related to their CSR efforts. Table four demonstrates the interview questions.

Table 4. Interview questions developed by the author (source: own chart, based on Emrich, 2015 & Heinrich, 2013).

About the company	
1.	What is your job at the company?
2.	What is the mission of the company?
3.	What is the target group of the company?
4.	What is the company's definition of "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR)?
The role of CSR within the company	
5.	How important is CSR for the company?
	Does the company exert CSR activities?
	If yes, are they integrated in its business strategy?
6.	In which area of the organisation is CSR allocated?
7.	What kind of CSR instruments does the company use? Please name examples.
8.	Which goals does the company follow with its CSR engagement?
9.	By reference to the company's CSR activities, which group would you allocate the company to?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denier • Risk minimizer • Differentiator
10.	What is the difference between "risk minimizer" and "differentiator" for you?
CSR as marketing instrument	
11.	<p>"The specialized literature points to the fact that corporations are forced by the increasing critical society to develop communications instruments in the CSR area which allow a professional society-oriented communication" (Schaffner, 2013, p.2; own translation).</p> <p>What is your opinion to this citation?</p> <p>According to the nowadays boom to the sustainability awareness, is it enough for a company (in the outdoor sports area) using CSR activities/ CSR-communication just for risk minimizing or is the market positioning appointed by CSR as brand differentiation?</p>
12.	Does the company conduct "sustainability marketing" (CSR-communication especially for marketing purposes)?
13.	How do you recognize the company's CSR in the "4 P's of marketing"?
14.	Does the company use actively CSR activities as communication instrument (internal & external)? If yes what kind of instruments?
15.	Does the company support only CSR activities with direct connection to the corporation's philosophy?

<p>16. According to outdoor sports brands how do you evaluate the future development of CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument?</p> <p>17. Based on your opinion is there a lot of <i>Greenwashing</i> in the outdoor sports market?</p> <p>And in your opinion which companies (outdoor sport brands) implement CSR exemplary in the marketing area (no <i>Greenwashing</i>)?</p> <p>18. Does the company support the development of CSR in the outdoor sports area together with other brands?</p> <p>19. Does the company achieve competitive advantage or profit increase by using CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument?</p>
<p>“CSR-SWOT-Analysis”</p> <p>20. What kind of strengths does the company have according to CSR as marketing instrument?</p> <p>21. What kind of weaknesses does the company have?</p> <p>22. Which chances in the CSR area does the company see in comparison to the competitors?</p> <p>23. What kind of risks does the company see in the CSR activities in the outdoor sports area?</p>

4.2.2 Online analysis

For accomplishing the second purpose of this research, a benchmark tool developed based on the previous mentioned literature (Butow, 2014; Emrich, 2015; Heinrich, 2013) and on the results of the conducted interviews. The benchmark tool includes 23 criteria related to a collection of “yes and no answers” whereby the online CSR-communication performance of the respective outdoor brands is analysed. The collection of “yes and no answers” allows a higher comparability and provides the reader with an easier understanding of the results. Table five lists the 23 criteria.

Table 5. *Criteria for analysis of outdoor brands' online CSR-communication (source: own chart, based on Butow, 2014; Emrich, 2015; Heinrich, 2013).*

N°	Criteria	Yes/ No
1	Business mission contains CSR engagement	
2	CSR/ Sustainability engagement is communicated on main corporation website	
3	Extra part for CSR/ Sustainability available on website	
4	Extra CSR mission statement	
5	Management declarations related to CSR	
6	Specific annual CSR-/ Sustainability report	
7	Code of conduct is communicated	
8	Partnership with CSR-/ sustainability related associations is communicated	
9	Third-party verification is communicated on website	
10	Availability of CSR-label created by corporation	
11	Donation campaigns are communicated	
12	CSR-/ Sustainability awards are communicated	
13	Brand communicates own created CSR projects	
14	CSR related advertisement campaigns	
15	CSR blog/ CSR related FAQ	
16	CSR related media reports linked on website	
17	CSR-/ Sustainability related video is available on website	
18	Company communicates CSR activities actively on social media channels	
19	Option for product giving back, repairing or recycling worn wear	
20	Environmental-friendly packaging is communicated	
21	Information about product care is given	
22	Consumers gets information about the implementation of sustainability materials	
23	CSR/ Sustainability related future plans are communicated	

4.3 Process

The following two chapters provide an overview of the consulted research processes, which are summarized together in chapter 5.3.

4.3.1 Interviews

The interviews were conducted via online interview or in written form via e-mail. All participating brands were able to read the interview questions before. The online interview had a duration of around 60 minutes and was recorded. All four interview results are available in the appendix (s. appendix A for the complete proof). As it is a standardized open-end interview, the interviewees were completely free in answering. Furthermore, interviewer and respondents were able to ask interposed questions, what provides more detailed information.

For the interview analysis the author put the respondents of the four brands in comparison based on already existing literature. As it is a qualitative research method and all participating interviewees had no given answers, the analysis is based on a complete objective and qualitative interpretation.

4.3.2 Online analysis

For the second research part, the online analysis, the author consulted the corporate's website of the representative 22 outdoor brands. The collection of the data is based on the previously introduced benchmark tool. All collected data is available in the appendix (s. appendix B for the complete proof). As there is no existing scale in the literature, the author consulted the three sustainability oriented marketing strategies (s.ch.2.3.3) and took all collected data into comparison with these. Furthermore, as the literature points out the outdoor brand Patagonia as CSR related brand differentiator, the author took the results of the online analysis of Patagonia as role model. This provides a more effective analysis and better understanding for the reader.

5. Results and discussion

In this part the author demonstrates the results of the two conducted research methods. As the online analysis is also based on the results of the interviews the author first summarises the results of the interviews and consequently the outcomes of the consulted benchmark tool.

5.1 Results of the interviews

The following chapter will summarize and analyse the conducted standardized open-end interview developed by the author. The results are demonstrated in the four categorisations of the conducted interview.

About the company:

The interviewees were asked for the corporation's mission statement. For a better understanding of the mission statement comparison all four brands' mission will be cited in the following table six.

Table 6. Mission statements of participated brands (source: own chart).

Company	Mission statement
A	<i>"To produce alpine sport equipment and to enable our clients a safe and comfortable agitation in the mountains and reach of their limits"</i> (Company A, 2016; own translation).
B	<i>"A three-fold responsibility builds the foundation for the business philosophy; people, planet, product. As a value-based company, the company B is committed to a sensitive and sustainable approach towards all its stakeholders, employees, consumers, partners and public alike"</i> (Company B, 2016; own translation).
C	<i>"Sustainability throughout the entire product life cycle"</i> (Company C, 2016; own translation).
D	<i>"The company provides customers with innovative, branded and proprietary technologies that increase the performance, comfort, and value of their products. Our goal is to delight our partners with exceptional service and outstanding quality"</i> (Company D, 2016).

As table six shows, company A's and D's mission statements focus exclusively on the product quality and performance and on the satisfaction of the outdoor consumers. In turn company B highlights in its mission statement a so-called "three-fold responsibility" what is based on people, product and planet. Hence company B builds a link to the so-called TBL (s.ch.2.2.1).

But company B's mission statement does not contain the corporation's economic approach. With *people*, company B promises fair working conditions and a social support and by *planet* the typical sustainability goals, plus *product* defines a sustainable and eco-friendly production. A complete sustainable business mission statement is given by company C. Company C emphasises through the entire mission statement it's environmental, sustainable, future orientated and transparent production but does not mention any economic approach.

Question three is about the respective corporation's CSR definition, what is demonstrated in table seven:

Table 7. CSR definition of participated brands (Source: own chart).

Company	CSR definition
A	<i>"We have a classical triple-bottom-line vision of CR, that means we understand under CR a management approach, that does not focus only on the economic approach, but makes the socio-ecological responsibility to a concrete part of our strategy"</i> (Company A, 2016; own translation).
B	<i>"As a value-based corporation, company B committed to a sustainable interaction with all stakeholder – consumers, partners, supplier, society – and with the environment"</i> (Company B, 2016; own translation).
C	<i>"Company C understand CSR as meaning our corporate responsibility towards people, society and nature, with which we want to establish a healthy balance between economic, environmental and social objectives"</i> (Company C, 2016; own translation).
D	<i>"Make money, treat all stakeholders fairly, do no harm"</i> (Company D, 2016).

According to the particular corporation's CSR definition, it is interesting to see that all brands represent a link the TBL. The definition of company C shows all three points of a traditional TBL as well as company D's very simple CSR definition. Also, company A defines its CSR as by the classical TBL, that means the company is dealing with economic as well as with social and ecological issues. It is interesting that interviewee A says that CSR is such a complex term that the corporation divides it in three parts which are called *Corporate Governance*, *Corporate Citizenship* and the divers CSR activities with direct reference to the core business. For company A, *Corporate Governance* includes the company's organisation chart and all communication parts and *Corporate Citizenship* describes all philanthropic efforts. In comparison, company B defines CSR already in its mission statement and

emphasises that company B is a value-based corporation with commitment to sustainable interaction with all stakeholders. Company B does not mention the economic part of its CSR while all the other brands do so.

All in all, here one can say, that company A's CSR-definition gives the most specific and literature linked definition which includes the integration of social and environmental concerns, ethical business behaviour, the consideration of human and labour rights, to provide transparency to all stakeholders by its communication (s.ch.2.1.2).

The role of CSR within the company:

The following question of the interview deals with the role of CSR in the companies, if there are any CSR activities and if it is anchored in the core business. All four brands confirm the existing of CSR activities and in total three agree that they are part of the core business. Company D explains that CSR plays a crucial role within the brand and that the interaction with all stakeholders is anchored in the core business but not specifically the CSR efforts. According to the CSR role within the participated companies, company A explains that it is not easy to define it but rather to define the corporation's motivation for CSR. These are on one side the consumers' satisfaction and on the other side the tool for risk mitigation. This shows the link to the brand classification, defined in chapter 2.3.3. Company B and C emphasise both, that CSR is the heart of the brand, and that it is more than just external communication. Whereas company D points out, like company A, that defining the role of CSR within a company is critical and that the main goals of every company is making money. What interviewee D emphasises here is that does not exclude CSR but gives a very simple explanation: *"If companies do not make money they cease to exist and all of their stakeholders suffer"* (Company D, 2016). Here, one can see how interviewee D has the same opinion as Choiunard and Stanely (2012), who say that a business cannot be social and environmental responsible without being financially save and able to grow (s.ch.2.4.2).

Questions six until eight analyse in which departments CSR is allocated within the companies, which CSR instruments are used and what are the brands' goals with their particular CSR engagement. These answers are summarised in the table eight.

Table 8. CSR embedding, -goals, and -instruments (Source: own chart).

Company	Departments with CSR relation	CSR goals	CSR instruments
A	Strategy department – department of brand- and business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image improvement • Integration into society • Employees' motivation • Risk mitigation • Innovation • Fulfilling the customers' requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsoring • CR-report • CR related donations • Other communication channels
B	Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image improvement • Integration into society • Employees' motivation • Communication of social responsibility • sustainable economic benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsoring • Cause related marketing • Donation campaigns • Corporate volunteering
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR-department • Management • Sales department • Product development/ -management department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image improvement • Integration into society • Employees' motivation • Communication of social responsibility • sustainable economic benefit • Improvement of production conditions to environmental and social friendly products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsoring
D	Core business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping well at night • Retention of employees • Sustainable manufacturing • Risk mitigation 	<p><i>“All decision making is predicated on honesty, integrity, transparency and fairness” (Company D, 2016).</i></p>

Company A defines the anchor of CSR in the so-called strategy-department, what deals with brand- and business development. While B names just the management and brand-and

business department as “CR-department”, company C lists next to management also PR-department, sales department and product development. Interviewee D is the one brand that lists all departments and has the opinion that CSR cannot be separated by business departments and should be transparent in all business decisions. Here, it is obvious that all four brands point out that CSR is connected to the management department which can be an indication that CSR is anchored in the core business.

According to the brands’ goals with the particular CSR engagement company B and C gave the same answer and agree with all from the interviewer listed goals: image improvement, integration into society, employees’ motivation, communication of social responsibility and sustainable economic benefit. Also, company A is agreeing with the goal of image improvement and integration in the society. Related to the employee motivation and the communication to the stakeholders, company A says that there is an immense change happening and that these issues are becoming more and more important in the outdoor industry, however brand A does not have the focus on that yet. Company A also does not seek any economic benefit out of CSR instruments, rather more costs. The last goals are like company A already defined at question five, as its motivation for CSR like risk mitigation, innovation increase and consumers’ satisfaction. Even company D defines risk mitigation as goal but does not agree with all the other listed goals and defines its business specific goals which are as followed: “*Sleeping well at night*” (Company D, 2016), employees’ retention, integration into the progressive business climate and sustainable manufacturing. The responses of companies B and C represent the statement of Emrich (2015), that brand credibility and reputation increases by business transparency (s.ch.2.3.2). The brands see their goal by implementing CSR activities in brand image which represents brand reputation. Another interesting fact is, that company A mentions again the goal of risk mitigation as well as company D does, so there is a classification tendency related to CSR efforts visible in the outdoor industry.

As one can see at table eight, the participated companies implement different CSR instruments. Company A, B and C define sponsoring as CSR instrument. Other instruments are CR-report, cause related marketing, donations campaigns and corporate volunteering.

Question ten is based on sustainability-oriented competition strategy classification (Emrich, 2015) which has been simplified into the three groups: denier, risk minimizer, differentiator (s.ch.2.3.3). For a better understanding the defined classifications are provided as followed.

Table 9. CSR related brand classification, defined by the participated companies (source: own chart).

Company	Classification
A	Risk minimizer
B	Differentiator
C	Differentiator
D	Denier

As one can see in table nine, Company A defines the brand as risk minimizer because the corporation does not use active CSR activities to reach a better competitor position in the outdoor industry. The company sees its CSR activities as a so-called add-on but does not identify itself by its CSR activities, *“like the brands Patagonia, VAUDE or Haglöfs”* (Company A, 2016; own translation). In comparison interviewee B allocates the company as differentiator and emphasises that the company’s focus is on sustainability and its sustainability communication to all stakeholders. Interesting is the statement of company B: *“the corporation contrasts from its competitors by active sustainability marketing and follow the goal of brand differentiation by sustainability”* (Company B, 2016; own translation). Company C does not give an explicit answer and gives only the statement that the main goal of the brand’s CSR activities is risk mitigation but the CSR-communication in total is more than just a tool for minimizing the risks. With this statement one can say, that company C already shows an immense tendency to define itself as brand differentiator. Company D defines the corporation as denier of CSR activities but this because the company’s foundation of its marketing efforts is not based on its CSR activities hence the company mentions it in its marketing communication: *“the core technology is naturally derived, recycled, human friendly and permanent”* (Company D, 2016).

Furthermore, the interviewer asks how the companies would define the differentiation of risk mitigation and differentiator. While company B and C do not give any answer, company A gives the following definition: *“For me a differentiator is a corporation which builds its whole business identity on the brand’s sustainability performance”* (Company A, 2016; own translation). So based on the already answered question you can say that company B and C are differentiator because they always mention that the core business is built on the CR-performance. Furthermore, interviewee A gives another definition which shows the difference between brand A and *Patagonia*, known as sustainability idol in the outdoor brand industry,

based on their message to their consumers. Company A delivers the message: *“Buy this jacket because it is the best and lightest product on the market and by the way also sustainable.* While differentiator brands like Patagonia say: *“Our products are primary sustainable and by the way also not bad”* (Company A, 2016; own translation). Also, company D shows its interpretation of risk minimizer and differentiator by the example of two successful brands, *Nike* and also *Patagonia*. *Patagonia* for example builds the whole marketing communication strategy and brand identity on sustainability, while *Nike* that focuses on avoiding negative press or consequences by its CSR-communication.

CSR as marketing instrument:

Questions eleven until 19 are based on if and how the brands use CSR as marketing tool. At question eleven, the interviewer gives the following citation: *“Nevertheless the professional literature points out that, based on the increasing critical public, corporations are forced to develop communication tools in the CR-division which allow a professional society-oriented communication”* (Schaffner, 2013, p.2; own translation).

First of all, all companies agree with the cited statement what corroborates the chapter 2.1.1 mentioned statement by Miluwi (2013) that CSR activities are becoming more and more important in the world of business, nationally and internationally. Interviewee A emphasises again that with the critical observation of consumers, NGOs and media it is impossible for outdoor brands to avoid developing and communicating their CSR activities. Even so, according to company A it is also impossible that every outdoor brand tries to use CSR-communication as brand differentiation tool. Company A emphasised, if all brands implements the differentiation strategy by its CSR-communication, there would be no possibility anymore of any differentiation. So, the conclusion of interviewee A is yes, it is right that outdoor brands must communicate and show their CSR activities but creating brand identity by CSR is reserved for just a few.

Company B and C have the opinion in common that communicating a brand's CSR activities without being anchored in the business philosophy can cause the danger of *Greenwashing*. Whereby, it is also mentioned, that at the end consumers or the environment have no prime importance on the brand's motivation for implementing CSR activities. Thus, it is enough to implement some, communicate them well and avoid like that negative press. So yes, it is enough to implement the risk mitigation strategy.

Company D adds to the statement that the citation is right and that the nowadays society puts the pressure on companies all over the world, that is not to forget that the society is still trained to focus on short-term economic interests what excludes the characteristic of sustainability, the long-term aspect.

The interview also shows that just one of the four participated brands answer the question if they implement sustainability marketing with yes. Company C mentions that if a brand conducts a lot of CSR efforts then it should communicate it, so in this case sustainability marketing is the optimal add-on. Company A says, that the company implements sustainability marketing on a really low level which includes the CSR-communication on the webpage and the few hangtags on the products, but the company has no specific sustainability marketing strategy. Also, Company B answer the question more or less like company A, the goal of a company should be to produce environmental friendly and respect the social issues, marketing is just a positive side effect, whereas company D answers the question with no.

Question 13 allows a closer look on the marketing aspect of CSR by analysing the “four P’s of Marketing” (s.ch.2.2.1). Company A says, that related to the product it is readably identifiably because the company implements certain measures like using less toxins and more sustainable materials. But the interviewee says clearly that the company does not focus on sustainable product design rather on product development based on quality and performance. Whereas there are various other brands, that put the focus on sustainability. Related to the price the interviewee has the opinion that it is important not to let the sustainability aspect have any influence on the price. In the outdoor brand industry customers are still willing to pay more for product quality and performance but not based on the CSR-activities of the corporation. The third P “place” also does not show any CSR influence. According to promotion/ communication the interviewees answer partly yes, like it was already explained in the answer of question eight (s.p.46). Company A does not have any advertisement related to sustainability but it uses some communication channels with the goal to inform transparent its customers.

Company B lists the following facts how CSR is visible according its product: “*production with less use as possible, use of environment-friendly materials, heeding recycle capability and implementation of third-party label*” (Company B, 2016; own translation). According to the second P “price” company B says that the sustainable production should not have any influence on the products’ price. The company’s sustainable distribution is based on its local

headquarters and the optimal use of transport ways. The last P that represents the communication in the sustainability marketing mix, as defined in chapter 2.2.4, is according to company B based on credible and authentic communication.

Company C shows, that all four P's are reflecting the company's CSR efforts. Company C develops only sustainable innovative products which are identified by the company's own label. It is also important, like the other interviewees also mentioned, that CSR should not have any influence on the price, if then the corporation would not stay marketable. By including CSR activities in the company's distribution, company C gets new customer groups and evokes a widespread presence on the outdoor brand market. According to the fourth P "promotion" the interviewee gives the clear answer that *"CSR is our brand communication"* (Company C, 2016; own translation), what accents strongly that company C is implementing actively CSR-communication. Company D does not give any information.

The thesis focuses on the brands' CSR-communication, so the question about the external and internal communication tools arises. Company A agrees that they implement external as well as internal CSR-communication. While company A uses media work like press conferences passive and just as reaction on consumers' or media questions, publications like CR-report or company flyers are actively used. Online communication and events are also not seen as main tool for CSR-communication, Interviewee explains that if the consumers are interested they get the basic information on the business webpage, but there is no focus on CSR. The focus of company A's communication is on the brand's quality and performance. Company B and C have also here the answer in common, both corporations use media work, publications, online communication and events as communication tool, whereby company B publishes no specific CR-report. Company D only gives the example of the business charity donations but which are not communicated actively.

According to the interviewees' opinion about the future development of CSR as communication tool all four companies answer differently. *"I hope that one day there will be a comprehensive, independent communication tool which informs transparently the consumers about the brands' CR-performance"* (Company A, 2016; own translation). This statement represents exactly what Vucurevic (2017) points out at the ISPO Munich that the outdoor industry needs to implement a common verification standardisation (s.ch.2.4.4). Company A has the opinion that the outdoor brands industry needs certain comparability and a common transparency. There is already a movement in this direction but it will take its time to have a final and general label what scores the sustainability performance of a company.

The interviewee says that till this happens CSR as communication-/ marketing tool will be used separate and business connected. But there are already a lot of third-party labels like *bluesign* and FWF that give the outdoor brands' consumers already the possibility to compare different brands on a certificated level. Company B refers to the answer of question 12 and adds the words "*CR egresses far over marketing*" (Company B, 2016; own translation). Company C gives a short answer and says that the CSR-communication in the outdoor industry should not become greenwashing. And brand D "*Of limited value and not something we will invest in*" (Company D, 2016). According to these answers it is obvious that all interviewed outdoor brands have different expectations to the CSR trend and development within outdoor industry.

The following question is asking for the greenwashing situation in the outdoor industry and which brands are the idols. Company A describes the current CSR-communication in the outdoor industry as quite critical. A lot of companies are still reserved in communicating active and progressively out of fear to be valid as greenwashing brand. That is why the majority uses still CSR-communication as risk mitigation and not yet as differentiation tool. As communication idol, the interviewee names again *Patagonia*, like company D also does. While company B does not give any information interviewee C names its own brand as idol in the outdoor industry.

An important aspect of the current situation in the outdoor brands industry is the sustainable development. Company A, B and C prove that they are collaborating with other brands and try to develop the optimal CR-effort valid for all outdoor brands. This helps all stakeholders especially the important consumers not having to deal with the so-called sustainability jungle. Company C adds to this question that their goal is also "*bringing up a painful subject*" (C, 2016, own translation). Which emphasises, that company C is pushing the CSR level in the outdoor industry, and represents the characteristic of a differentiator, as mentioned in chapter 2.3.3, what is putting pressure on all other competitors and publish constantly new sustainability discussions. Company D says that the brand is not collaborating with other brands with the focus of CSR development.

The last question related to CSR as marketing instrument is about the competitors' advantage or increased economic benefits by the implementation by CSR-communication. Company C answers this with a simple "yes". This shows again, that company C's brand mission and communication is built on CSR. Interviewee B says that there is an economic benefit identifiable but emphasises that this is not caused by the brand's CSR effort as marketing tool,

rather on the company's business strategy to produce as environment-friendly and social tolerably as possible. Company A gives the information that the company did not experience anything like that, but also because the company does not focus on the statement "*yes we get more profit by our CR-activities*" (Company A, 2016; own translation). And company D says that the company experienced this situation if then just limited.

CSR-SWOT-Analysis:

The last part of the interview is based on the SWOT-analysis. The strengths and weaknesses are related to the company's internal analysis, while opportunities and threats are demonstrating the corporation's position within the competition market. In this case the interviewees were asked to define all four parts related to the organisations' CSR efforts. For a better understanding the answers were summarised in the following table:

Table 10. CR-SWOT-Analysis of interviewed brands (source: own chart; based on conducted interviews).

Brand	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear strategy and focus • Motivated employees and CR supportive management • High standards with official labels • Collaboration with other brands; supporting the sustainability development in this branch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few resources for CR-efforts • Forced to improve the CR-communication tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfying consumers' needs by implementing and communicating optimal the CR-activities • Collaborating with others and not working against them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing risk of the communication becoming too excessive • Risk of overloaded information for consumers by hangtags-, "label-jungle" • Pressure from outside pushes the risk of <i>Greenwashing</i> • To satisfy consumers' request for quality toxins are still needed
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • Congruence of production sanctions • Congruence of communication measures 	No answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company is able to reach communicated goals • Focus on small and effective steps 	No answer
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High credibility by holistic and systematic implementation of CR-strategy and external verification of success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve organisation's work against <i>Greenwashing</i> and create clear policy • Communication still too reserved and not visible in brands' stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear position related to company's CSR-efforts • Whole outdoor industry would improve the image by increasing the CR-level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor branch is in danger caused by companies which put performance over CSR • The entire branch has to lower the common CSR-risk
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company's technology is permanent • Organisation pays and treats everyone fairly, employees, suppliers and customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company is a small and ethical one which competes against other big ones which exaggerate their product claims and positive environmental impact 	Brand's focus is not on being competitive by its CR-efforts, rather by its performance and innovation level	<i>"Life is risky; we are all acrobats tiptoeing over one bride or another. To the tightrope walker, the bridge is just like home"</i> (D, 2016, 18th century Japanese poem).

During the interview, it was recognisable that the brands show different specific characteristics, which emphasise the brand classification related to their CR-communication effort and importance. The following table seven will give a summary of the classification characteristics:

Table 11. *Brand classification based on CSR-communication (source: own chart; based on conducted interviews).*

Denier	Risk minimizer	Differentiator
Mission statement focuses on brand's quality and performance	Mission statement focuses on brand's quality and performance	Mission statement includes company's CSR efforts
Simple CSR definition with emphasise the company's profit	CSR definition represents the typical TBL	CSR definition does not include the company's economic approach
No CSR-communication	CSR-communication present but not active	Active CSR-communication
Just quality	Quality above sustainability	Sustainability above quality
Competitor advantage by product performance	Competitor advantage by product performance	Competitor advantage by product sustainability
Brand differentiation by quality	Brand differentiation by quality and sustainability	Brand differentiation by sustainability

Summarizing the responses, it is obvious that external communication became the most important tool to demonstrate the outdoor brands' CSR activities. Yet, there are no rules and no guidelines for CSR-communication in the outdoor branch, what makes it quite complex and uncontrollable. It still brings the danger of *greenwashing* and *label-jungle* with it, but external pressure by NGOs, third-party verifications and brands' collaborations are showing a positive change.

5.2 Results of online analysis

The following chapter will summarize and compare the analysed criteria mentioned in the previous chapter. First the results of each brand are demonstrated and consequently the results are summarized. As mentioned in the literature review, the outdoor brand Patagonia is known for its sustainability actions and provocative communication. Based on that, Patagonia was used as example for the CSR related classification “differentiator” and a comparison was drawn for the other 21 analysed outdoor companies. For a better understanding the following table ten demonstrates the results of the CSR-communication of Patagonia.

Table 12. *Analysis of CSR-communication on the brand Patagonia's website (source: own chart).*

N°	Criteria	Yes/ No
1	Business mission contains CSR engagement	Yes
2	CSR/ Sustainability engagement is communicated on main corporation website	Yes
3	Extra part for CSR/ Sustainability available on website	Yes
4	Extra CSR mission statement	Yes
5	Management declarations related to CSR	Yes
6	Specific annual CSR-/ Sustainability report	No
7	Code of conduct is communicated	Yes
8	Partnership with CSR-/ sustainability related associations is communicated	Yes
9	Third-party verification is communicated on website	Yes
10	Availability of CSR-label created by corporation	No
11	Donation campaigns are communicated	Yes
12	CSR-/ Sustainability awards are communicated	Yes
13	Brand communicates own created CSR projects	Yes
14	CSR related advertisement campaigns	Yes
15	CSR blog/ CSR related FAQ	Yes
16	CSR related media reports linked on website	Yes
17	CSR-/ Sustainability related video is available on website	Yes
18	Company communicates CSR activities actively on social media channels	Yes
19	Option for product giving back, repairing or recycling worn wear	Yes
20	Environmental-friendly packaging is communicated	Yes
21	Information about product care is given	Yes
22	Consumers gets information about the implementation of sustainability materials	Yes
23	CSR/ Sustainability related future plans are communicated	No

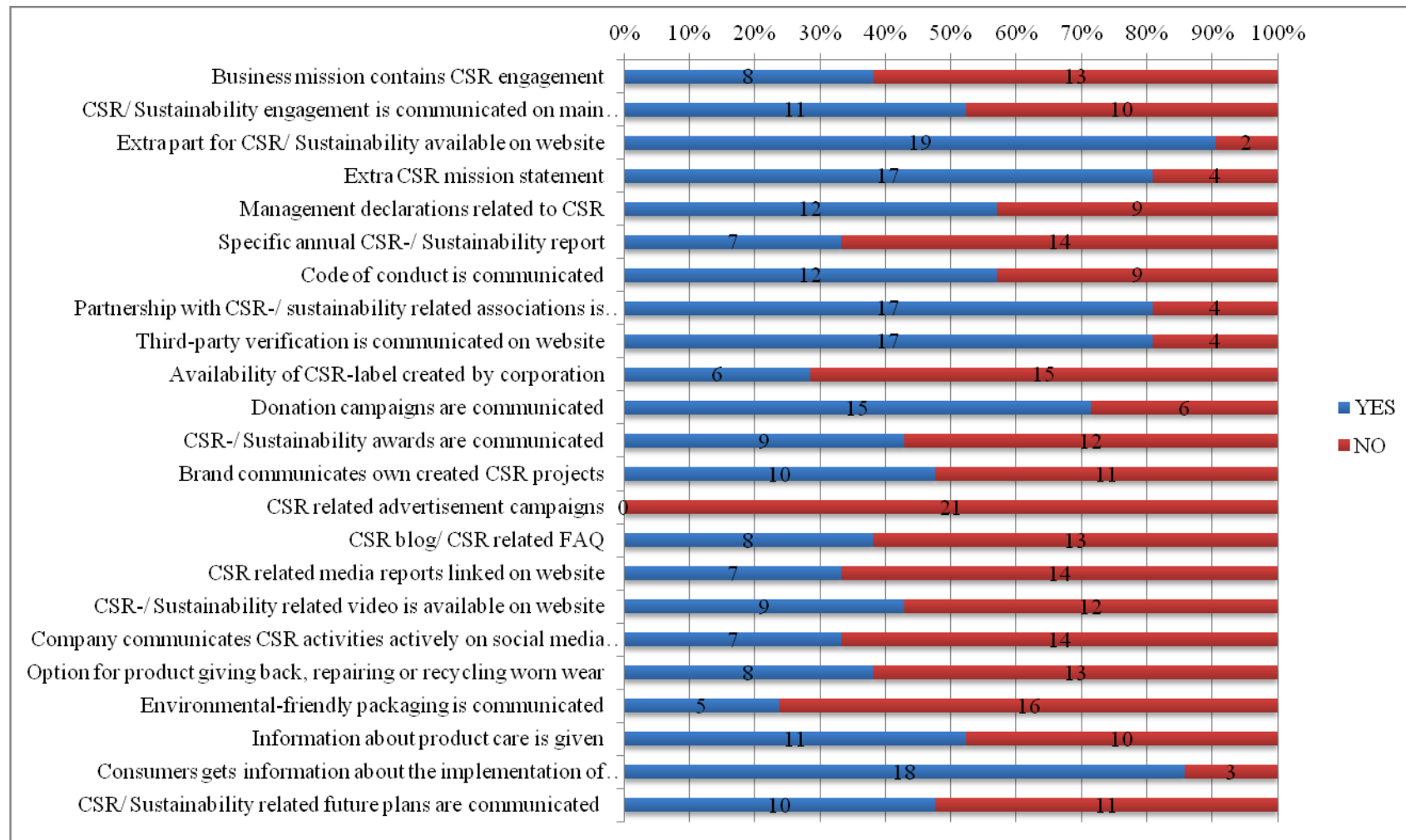


Figure 6. Summary of analysed criteria related to the CSR-communication of outdoor brands (source: own chart).

Figure six summarizes the results of the analysed criteria. The first criteria analyses if the particular business mission statement contains any relation to the brand's CSR engagement which at the case of Patagonia is affirmed. It was noted that 38% of the examined companies confirm the criterion. This points out that there is a tendency that outdoor companies include their CSR engagement in their business philosophy and for the consumers a sign that CSR is part of the core business, but there is still the majority which focuses only on product quality and the promise of selling the best product.

Furthermore, as one can see, already 52% of the analysed brands communicate their CSR approach on their corporate's main webpage, whereas by far the majority with 90% provides an extra part which is related to the company's CSR effort and understanding. On Patagonia's website the consumer gets confronted with the business CSR efforts already on the main page as well as on various extra parts about the company's CSR- and sustainability efforts, what leads immense the customer in direction of sustainable brand awareness. Also, the criterion if the analysed outdoor brands communicate an extra sustainability or CSR related mission statement can be answered with yes with the majority of 80%. These data show that the majority does not communicate their CSR approach actively on the main page but most almost all companies deal with their CSR activities and communicate these also to their consumers, what proofs again, that outdoor companies cannot ignore anymore the presence of the CR-communication importance but still just a few use this tool actively.

The next examined criterion deals with the management declaration related to the brand's CSR efforts. In the case of Patagonia this criterion can be confirmed, as already emphasised in the previous literature review (s.ch.2.4.3) and demonstrated in table ten. The whole business philosophy and activities are based on the founder's mind set of environmental and social responsibility which includes various management declarations related to corporate's CSR. In comparison to the other 21 analysed outdoor brands 57%, barely more than half of the companies also communicate a CSR related management declaration. This criterion plays a crucial role in the communication strategy, management declarations create more credibility towards consumers and shows them that CSR is implemented from the top of the company.

A specific annual CR/ sustainability report is not published by Patagonia, whereas the company communicates all CSR activities on its website. Annual CR-reports are also seen quite critical as a tool for increasing the consumers' brand awareness and loyalty. Most of the

consumers are not interested in reading a number of pages which demonstrate the company's energy use and number of suppliers. Sustainable consumers are interested in sustainable materials and social friendly efforts of brands. This can be the reason why only 19% of the analysed outdoor brands are publishing a specific annual CR-report.

Criterion seven relates to the code of conduct of the respective brands. Codes of conducts are implemented by companies to assure fair labour and sustainable production, what has to be confirmed by all suppliers and manufactures. Of the 21 analysed outdoor brands 57% communicate their code of conduct, like Patagonia also does.

Research criterion number eight examines if the outdoor companies demonstrate partnerships to CSR- or sustainability related associations, like NGOs that were introduced previously in chapter 2.4.4. Patagonia is known for its various partnerships and foundations of NGOs associated with CSR activities, and communicates these actively on the consumers' website. Also 81% of the brands of this study introduce their partnerships with NGOs on their webpage. As defined in chapter 2.4.4 this is a crucial tool to communicate credible CSR activities to the customers. Chapter 2.4.4 also mentions the importance of label brands for outdoor companies. 80% of the examined brands as well as Patagonia possess third-party verifications like *bluesign*, *GOTS* and *RDS*. The labelling tool helps outdoor brands to communicate credibility and transparency to their consumers, as defined in chapter 2.4.4 (Emrich, 2015). But as the respondents of the previous conducted interviews and statements of the literature review (Company A, 2016; Company B, 2016; Thieringer, 2017) emphasise that the implementing of eco-labels creates a so-called "label-jungle" and can have the contrary result, like confusing the consumers and making them doubt which label can they trust. Another problem related to the sustainability product labelling is, that it is on one hand still on voluntary basis and on the other hand, any company is allowed to create their own label and communicate this to their consumers. Criterion ten analysed, that only 29% of the outdoor brands created their own label. Creating an own sustainability label should be seen critical because. As already said there are no rules to follow, so this can lead to the so-called greenwashing.

Another important part of CSR activities is related to donation campaigns. In the outdoor industry this is most of the time linked to NGOs but also various independent donation campaigns are communicated, like a clothes donation for the victims of the earthquake in Nepal. Figure six shows that 71% communicate donation campaigns, like Patagonia.

In the outdoor industry rewards like, “the best new product innovation of the year”, “the product with best technology of the year” or “the product with the best quality” play a crucial. Based on the consumers development to a sustainable purchasing behaviour in the outdoor industry, awards like “the most sustainable product of the year” became as important as the other ones. That is why outdoor brands are proud of communicating this, what in this case do 43% and also the brand Patagonia. It is also important to say, that the analysis focuses only on the communication of awards, not if the brands won already any award. So the 42% can also be a sign that just these companies won an award.

As criterion 13 demonstrates, ten outdoor brands, so 47% created already new CSR projects, like the brand Patagonia. This criterion points out that outdoor brands focus also on creating a sustainable acting through the entire outdoor industry and want to push other companies to support or create projects like this. At criterion 14 what analyses the ability of CSR related advertisement campaigns, one can see that none of the 21 analysed companies communicate or implement sustainable advertisement campaigns. However the brand is known for its radical advertisement campaigns (s.ch.2.4.3). This shows how Patagonia implements brand differentiation by CSR-communication.

Another communication tool is CSR blogs or an extra part with CSR related frequently asked questions (FAQ). Here, less than half of the analysed companies offer consumers a specific CSR related blog or include the corporate’s CSR effort in FAQ. Next to Patagonia, only eight other companies implement this tool. As the pressure of media also pushes the sustainability level more and more and consumers build their brand image associated to media reports, it is important that outdoor brands communicate these on their webpage. But only 33% of the brands do so. A reason for this can be that corporations want to avoid giving consumers the ability to resource on negative press.

Interesting to see at criterion 17 is that 43% use CSR- or sustainability related videos on their webpage to inform their consumers about the company’s CSR issues. Also Patagonia implements this tool, which helps informing customers about company’s CSR facts but also build an emotional connection by using experiences with the brand’s product or showing them pictorial the company’s supply chain.

The role of social media, like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, channels won an immense importance for companies’ communication strategies and more and more customers make resource on these channels. All companies use at least one of these communication channels

and link them also on their webpage, but only seven of the 21 analysed companies use them actively for communicating their CSR efforts. In comparison Patagonia uses these channels quite intensively, what helps the company keeping their sustainable image.

One standing out project of Patagonia is called “worn wear”, by this the brand motivated their customers to introduce any Patagonia product and tell the history about it. With this project, the brand manages to bring consumers to tell their stories about how they repair their products and create an image of a long-term brand. Other outdoor brands follow this and communicate special giving back possibilities, create projects about recycling old brand’s products and companies slowly start implementing to offer consumer to repair their product instead of buying always new ones. Figure six shows that 38% already follow this action.

Next to the sustainable production consumers are also becoming more aware and request about sustainable packing processes. In this analysis, the author can only confirm this at five companies. Criterion 21 examines the communication of product care what motivates brand’s consumers to focus on long-term use of bought products and slowly get rid of the mass consumption. Eleven of the 21 analysed companies inform their customers about product care. This data demonstrates that outdoor brands follow the objective of creating sustainable consumer behaviour within the outdoor industry.

The previous literature review also points out the consumers’ request about sustainable materials. A total of 18 out of the 21 brands, as well as Patagonia, inform their consumers about the implementation of sustainable products. The use of responsible down, organic cotton, the first PFC-free materials and hemp are just a few communicated sustainability approaches of the companies. In 2011, Greenpeace launched the so-called “Detox campaign” with the objective of forcing all outdoor brands to produce only PFC-free products. Various outdoor brands support this campaign already and communicated the objective PFC-free till latest 2020. This campaign initiated a positive movement in the outdoor industry and brands communicate more and more about sustainability related future plans. This is why criterion 22 was included in the analysis, what demonstrates if the outdoor brands promise sustainable future plans. Also here, ten out of the 21 companies implement the communication of future plans, but it is important to emphasise that Patagonia does not inform their consumers about any future plans.

The following analysis part takes a closer look on the particular brand's communication criteria in comparison to the result of the communication of Patagonia.

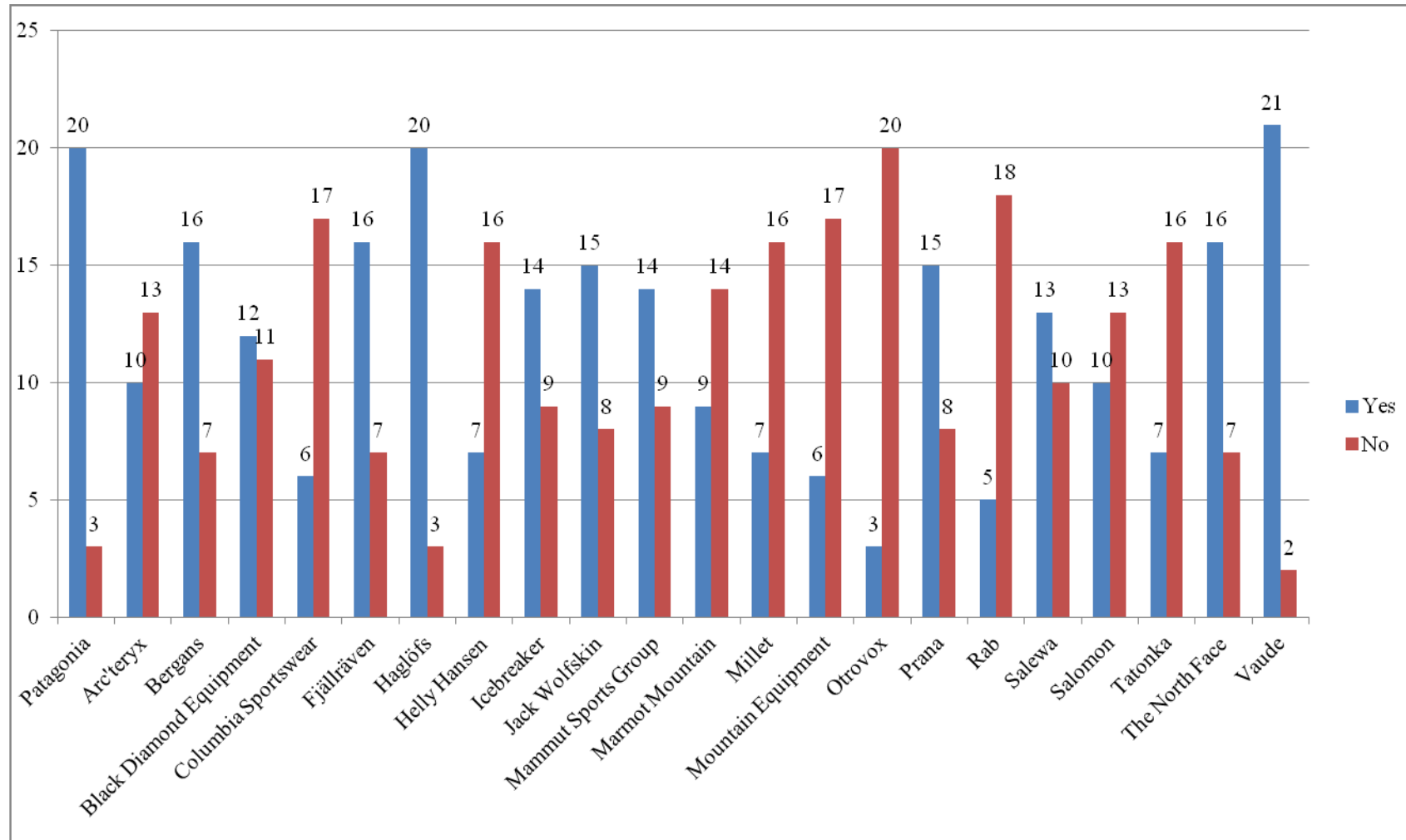


Figure 7. Summary of answers related to the CSR-communication analysis on the particular brands' websites (source: own chart).

Figure seven provides an overview of how many criteria can be confirmed at the particular brands and gives the opportunity to compare these to the results of the analysis of *Patagonia*. As one can see, Patagonia fulfils 20 out of 23 criteria what the author takes in comparison with the other 21 analysed brands.

Classification	Company	Number of “Yes” answers
Differentiator	Vaude	21
	Patagonia	20
	Haglöfs	20
Risk minimizer	Bergans	16
	Fjällräven	16
	The North Face	16
	Prana	15
	Jack Wolfskin	15
	Icebreaker	15
	Mammut Sports Group	14
	Salewa	13
	Black Diamond Equipment	12
	Salomon	10
	Arc’teryx	10
	Marmot Mountain	9
Denier	Helly Hansen	7
	Millet	7
	Tatonka	7
	Mountain Equipment	6
	Columbia Sportswear	6
	Rab	5
	Ortovox	3

The analysis of the conducted interviews has already demonstrated that the companies like *Patagonia*, *Vaude* and *Haglöfs* are known pioneers in CSR-communication and CSR related

brand differentiation (Company A, 2016). This statement can be proofed by the second research part. As figure seven shows, the brand *Haglöfs* fulfils in total 20 criteria, as Patagonia does. However, it is interesting, that the brand *Vaude* takes actually the lead with 21 achieved criteria. All three companies communicate a CSR related business mission, what recognisable through the entire communication within the corporations' websites. *Patagonia*, *Vaude* and *Haglöfs* represent the previous defined characteristics of strategy type "brand differentiator" (s.ch.2.3.3). The brands communicate an ecological and social product innovation and implement a proactive CSR-communication, with the objective of changing the outdoor branch as a whole.

The classification with the most outdoor brands is the group of "risk minimizer", what fulfil between 16 until nine criteria. The outdoor brands *Bergans*, *Fjällräven* and *The North Face* fulfil the same number of criteria, in total 16 closely followed by the brands *Prana*, *Icebreaker* and *Jack Wolfskin* with 15 confirmed criteria. The brand *Mammut Sports Group* fulfils in total 14 criteria. These outdoor brands show the characteristics of all three strategy types, which represent the group "risk minimizer". They all communicate certain, reliable and efficient, By implementing third-party verifications, communicating a less environmental pollution they build a sustainable positive brand image. The brands *Salewa*, *Black Diamond Equipment*, *Arc'teryx*, and *Marmot Mountain* are also defined as risk minimizer, but focus more on a reliable and certain marketing strategy (Emrich, 2015; s.ch.2.3.3).

On one hand these outdoor brands implement already various CSR-communication tools and show the effort of having a positive brand image related to sustainability, but on the other hand still have the tendency to stay reserved concerning the corporate's CSR-communication. This quite typical for the marketing strategies reliable and credible which the author summarised in risk mitigation. By doing this, the brands avoid the risk of being in the spotlight of negative press or sustainability campaigns but also focus not on too many communication channels to avoid the danger of greenwashing.

The analysed outdoor brands *Helly Hansen*, *Millet*, *Tatonka*, *Mountain Equipment*, *Columbia Sportswear*, *Rab* and *Ortovox* represent the classification "denier" with by far less than one-third of fulfilled criteria. These brands show an immense difference to the leading companies like *Patagonia* and *Vaude*. But it is also difficult to classify them as pure "denier". On one side they implement a few CSR-communication efforts and demonstrate that none of the outdoor brands denies CSR completely, but on the other side it is obvious that these outdoor

brands set the focus still more on creating a brand differentiation by product quality, new innovations and do not create any notion in direction sustainable consumption behaviour.

5.3 Discussion

Overall the interviews confirm what is mentioned in chapter 2.4.1, that CSR became a crucial role in the outdoor industry and that it became impossible to ignore. Though there is still an immense difference between the particular brand's CSR perception and importance recognisable. But one aspect is remarkable, all brands proof that the business trend changed from the single-bottom-line focus to the so-called TBL. There is also a tendency visible for the outdoor brands to collaborate and support a common sustainable development but also the tendency to focus on brand differentiation by sustainability. The author also mentions in chapter 2.2.4 the change of the four P's of marketing to a so-called sustainable marketing mix, what highlights the increasing importance of CSR-communication. During the interview the brands frequently emphasise exactly this, how important became an optimal CSR-communication in the outdoor industry. Whereas the term greenwashing was frequently mentioned what on one hand forces outdoor bands to stay reserved in their CSR-communication but on the other hand pushed some brands to build credibility by anchoring CSR within the entire corporation, communicating this well and building like this an optimal brand differentiation.

Based on the conducted interviews and the previous illustrated literature review, research questions one and two are answered:

RQ 1: *Which role does CSR-engagement play nowadays for outdoor brands?*

RQ 2: *Is sustainability marketing implemented by outdoor brands?*

By its definition, allowing outdoor enthusiasts to spend the optimal and most comfortable time in nature and the environment, the outdoor industry calls the external attention to the implemented CSR efforts. Furthermore, the change of sustainable buying behaviour and request to more transparency by outdoor brands consumer pushes the importance of CSR for outdoor brands into a high level. All in all, one can say that CSR plays a crucial role in the outdoor brand industry and any company cannot effort to be economical and survive on the constant growing competition market, without any implementation of effective CSR approaches. Another result is that from the viewpoint of a consumer enough implementing CSR-communication to satisfy the customers and avoid the risk of negative press. But the sustainability-oriented associations and verification companies are not sleeping and force outdoor brands more and more to develop an optimal, honest and effective CSR process within the entire business.

According to research question two, it is impossible to affirm that completely. On one hand, yes, outdoor brands implement sustainability marketing, but on the other the focus is on an optimal CSR-communication strategy and the marketing effect is rather seen as positive “add-on”. In this case the focus is still more on the traditional marketing. But all outdoor brands emphasise the importance of CSR-communication and the outdoor industry as a whole is moving in a direction where no CSR-communication will be impossible. It is important to mention here that not all companies rely on a competition differentiation by pure CSR-communication rather there are still some which deny active CSR efforts or are still quite passive in this way. The focus is still more on risk mitigation by CSR-communication, and brand differentiation rather by quality, but there is a tendency recognisable that will keep the sustainability development moving within the outdoor industry. So it cannot be confirmed, that sustainability marketing is implemented specific, but it is provable that CSR-communication is implemented within outdoor brands.

The objective of the second research part was answering RQ 3: *Due to the CSR-communication on outdoor brands’ website, is it possible to identify the three sustainability-oriented marketing strategies?*

It is the same situation as with RQ two, by a few six of the 21 analysed companies (excluded *Patagonia*) the author can agree that outdoor brands follow the CSR related brand differentiation strategy like *Patagonia*, the pioneer of sustainability communication. But on the other hand, the tendency of the outdoor brands’ CSR-communication objective still shows more the characteristics of risk mitigation. The two criteria with most “Yes-answers” are the availability of an extra CSR related part on the corporates’ websites and the communication of the implementation of sustainable material, closely followed by the criteria of an extra CSR related mission statement and the labelling of third-party verifications. These results show that the majority of outdoor brands is dealing with the CSR topics and is following the sustainable consumers’ requests.

Interesting is that one brand, *Vaude*, reaches more fulfilled criteria than *Patagonia* and the brand *Haglöfs* the same amount, this shows that *Patagonia* is not the only one which follows the mission of creating a complete sustainable brand image. Also, the respondents of the interviews mention exactly these three companies as pioneer of CSR related brand differentiation.

6. Conclusion, limitations and future research

Due to the immense growth of attention on CSR, especially in the outdoor industry, the aim of this study was to investigate the importance of sustainability marketing and CSR, especially CSR-communication, within outdoor brands and to analyse the CSR-communication performance on different outdoor brands' websites.

“Do good things and talk about it”, the main motto for marketers developing the optimal CR-communication. Nevertheless, that the idea of CSR-communication is not defined by these few words showed the author by providing an in-depth look into the concept of CSR.

Firstly, this thesis helps the reader understanding the birth of CSR and its complexity. Even nowadays, after more than 100 years of development, there is still no general definition.

Furthermore, this thesis took a closer look on the so-called sustainability marketing and what changes the world of marketing has experienced. It was pointed out that the famous *4 P's of marketing* were transformed, caused by the sustainable development within, to the nowadays known sustainable marketing mix, also known as the *4 C's of marketing*. The literature revealed how communication became a crucial role in the world of business, especially in the marketing strategies. So, the next parts of this paper were focused on conceptualising the so-called CSR-communication. Based on the consulted literature one can point out that CSR-communication can be defined as the tool corporations use to inform all their stakeholders their integration of social and environmental issues into the core of the business, and everything on a voluntary basis.

Following, this thesis emphasised the importance of brand equity for the businesses' survival. Also here is an immense change recognisable. The today's consumers ask for more than product quality also products' origins and processes behind the “business curtains” are more and more requested by customers. As brand equity plays a crucial role for the survival of businesses the author emphasised that CSR-communication is impossible to ignore. The consumers' perception of corporation's CSR efforts increased and the society shifts more and more towards complete sustainable consumption behaviour.

This research analysed the CSR-communication of outdoor brands. Different sustainability-oriented marketing strategies were consulted, based on Emrich (2015), and were summarised in three main groups. It is pointed out that regarding to the corporations' CSR-communication efforts the companies can be classified in “denier”, “risk minimizer” and “differentiator”. This classification conducted this thesis.

The next part was dealing with the outdoor industry, especially with the current CSR situation. The outdoor industry and CSR can both write down a remarkable growth and increased importance for the society and the world of business during the last decade. Hiking, biking, climbing are just a few outdoor sports, which are more and more requested and conducted by the society. Also interesting is to see that outdoor sports clothes became party of the people's day-by-day life and the outdoor industry as a whole experiences a boom as never before. Furthermore the outdoor industry leads the focus on nature and environment already by its definition as the outdoor industry is the industry sector that equips their consumers to spend time in nature what sends the focus of sustainability related NGOs and media on the CSR efforts of outdoor brands.

Various outdoor brands communicate already their CSR efforts by the help of eco-labels and verifications of NGOs. The role model in this case became the brand Patagonia. Various literature resources and media releases highlight *Patagonia* as the sustainable company pioneer.

Thus, the purpose of this study was defined by firstly analysing the role of CSR within the outdoor industry and the particular outdoor brands' opinion about sustainability marketing, especially CSR-communication, and consequently exploring the CSR-communication efforts on outdoor brands' websites. Firstly, a standardized open-end interview was conducted with the attention on the role of CSR as general and sustainability marketing, especially CSR-communication within the companies. Consequently the CSR-communication practices of 22 corporations were reviewed through a collection of 23 "Yes/ No" questions.

The first research part identified that CSR became a crucial role within the outdoor industry and impossible to deny completely. Moreover the interviews pointed out that the companies define their CSR-communication separately and do not see it actually as part of the sustainability marketing, the marketing is seen more as a positive add-on of an optimal CSR-communication. An important conclusion is though that the consulted corporations emphasise that it is not enough just communicating any CSR effort, it is important to communicate CSR as a whole business process and provide therefore transparency. Additionally, it was identified that companies also want to avoid allegation greenwashing, so they rather communicate less than too much without association to the core business. Nevertheless, marketing does play an increasing role, too because companies do want to create a positive brand equity.

Another important result is that different outdoor brands follow actually the objective of driving the outdoor industry as a whole to a social and environmental aware industry. Also the implementation of a common third-party eco-label is highly desired. Nevertheless, it is recognisable that there is CSR-communication related classification, as one brand defines itself as denier, one as risk minimizer and two as differentiator. Furthermore brands like *Patagonia*, *Haglöfs* and *Vaude* were named as pioneers of CSR-communication related brand differentiation.

Based on the results of the conducted interviews, it was explored if there was a classification visible by reference to the CSR-communication on corporations' websites. All in all, one can say that outdoor companies can be classified due to their CSR-communication on their corporate's website, whereas only four brands follow the role model of CSR-communication, the brand *Patagonia*. Seven of the 22 companies show no remarkable CSR-communication efforts and represent therefore the classification denier. Lastly it was identified that most of the brands implement CSR-communication more as risk mitigation than brand differentiation. But *Patagonia* will not stay the only brand what implements CSR-communication as brand differentiation tool, brands like *Haglöfs*, *Vaude* are also implementing the CSR related brand differentiation strategy. Furthermore various outdoor brands like *Bergans*, *Fjällräven*, *The North Face* and *Prana* are heading on the right direction and others will follow.

This research focused only on the one-way CSR-communication on the corporate's website. For further researches, it is suggested to include other communication channels, as sent newsletters, the hangtags on products presented in outdoor apparel shops or in corporation's own shop or a specific analysis of social media channels.

Furthermore, future researches can be done by taking a closer look on the purchasing behaviour of outdoor brands' consumers and identify the congruence with the particular brand's CSR-communication.

Moreover, the author only conducted four anonymous interviews, what prevented the author to take the brands' statements in direct comparison with the brands' communication. The author recommends conducting more interviews and comparing the results with the actual communication efforts.

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Appendix A – Interviews

Data declaration for interviews:



Lisbon, 24.07.2016

Interview for master thesis

This interview will be conducted for the following master thesis, written by Isabella Maria Limmer:
Communication of corporate responsibility: An analysis of different brands in the outdoor industry.

All collected data will be kept highly sensitive and is only for scientific purpose.

The interview will be recorded and cited literally.

All participated companies will be remained anonymous and will be defined as “company A, B, C ...”.

The companies will get the final version of the master thesis.

Thank you and best regards,

Isabella Limmer (author)

Prof. Dr. Abel Correia (supervisor)

Interview – Company A

Date: 11.01.2016

Interview process: Online interview; own translation

About the company

1. What is your job at the company? *CR - Manager*
2. What is the mission of the company? *To produce alpine sports equipment and to enable our customers a save and comfortable moving in the mountains and to enable them to reach their limits.*
3. What is the target group of the company?

We defined five different target groups:

1. *Alpine climbing (core group)*
2. *Trekking and hiking*
3. *Ski and snowboard: Winter athletes, whereas we don't define ourselves as a piste brand, more in the area of ski tours/freeride; not as a classical ski brand.*
4. What is the company's definition of "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR)?

We have a classical "triple-bottom-line vision" of CR, that means we understand under CR a management approach what doesn't focus just on the economic logic, but makes the social-ecological responsibility to a concrete part of our strategy. That means we don't want to check how we earn the most, at the same time we want to check that some social-ecological rules are followed, so inside of our business. So the typical "triple-bottom-line". What we have maybe as special aspect, because CR is a super complex word, that we divided it in three parts:

One is the "corporate governance", this is all about, how is our business built, how do we report, communicate and so on...

The other part is the "corporate citizenship", this is more about the philanthropy, so how does the society actually have to be, supporting volunteering projects.

And then there is the so-called core business, the CR-activities, which are directly in the core business, so the production of mountain sports equipment.

We actually said that corporate governance and corporate citizenship are not so important for us, better we focus clearly on the core business in the CR-area. We really focus on the production processes that means we want to use the major part of our resources for this part because there we are simply able to change the most, because we are able to influence directly there. We also have flanked consequences in CG and CC but these are all just small parts of our whole CR-strategy.

The role of CSR within the company

5. How important is CSR for the company?

Does the company exert CSR activities?

If yes, are they integrated in its business strategy?

Yes, that's correct, it is fix based in the business strategy. Which role it plays for us, that is a difficult question... I can tell you what motivates us to do that. On one hand it's the internal motivation, because we are simply all sustainable focused persons so we want to produce like that. We want to be a sustainable business. And we also recognize a growing customer requirement, the request for sustainable products, what we also take serious and want to fulfil, that's for sure. And we also see CR as motivation for innovation. It's like that, in the last 20 years, a lot of innovation has been influencing the performance of the products that means they all became much lighter or more waterproof. By time according to the product performance we are on a very very high level. Now the innovation, the same performance with sustainable material/ technique is makeable.

The other side is, that the problems which we identify, are always combined with risks, according to the image, we have the presence of media we have NGOs, which put pressure on us. And there it's also about how we minimize these risks with our CR activities.

On one side the role, the "upside", the positive customer requirement, innovation driver, on the other side for sure a tool for minimizing risks.

6. In which area of the organisation is CSR allocated?

The department is called "brand – and business development", it is a crux directly under the CEO and I would call us as "strategy department". We consider many strategy topics, with topics about the brand, so about identity, about customer awareness. I would say we are the strategy department. So I would say "others – strategy".

7. What kind of CSR instruments does the company use? Please name examples.

We use sponsoring in sense of that we have "corporate citizenship", so that we have non-profit projects, among whom we support mountain guides in developing countries like Kirgistan and Peru, with material and know-how. What we are not doing, we are not communicating this insanely. For us it is about doing something good and maybe we communicate this intern to our colleagues, but to the outside, to our customers actually not. We are not conducting the classical sponsoring while we are saying this brings us big attention.

Question in between: Do you say that sponsoring of athletes is a CR-activity?

No. So the classical athletes sponsoring, for sure we are conducting this, but in our understanding this has not much to do with CR-sponsoring. So this is more Marketing/ Communication in

classical way. Because we are expecting a counter-value of the sponsoring. With the sponsoring we are conducting, like Kirgistan, it is more non-profit. I would refer the two named ones to CR-sponsoring, and these are also the two, I conclude directly, so I'm involved personally. With the classical athlete sponsoring, I have nothing to do with, this is more connected to the marketing department.

We don't have foundations. Corporate volunteering we don't have at the moment, but we are about to build this.

Cause related marketing also rarely. So according to the named instruments, we are using just sponsoring. That we have more instruments that is obvious. We also have other communication channels for communicating our activities. We have the reporting and much more other instruments.

8. Which goals does the company follow with its CSR engagement?

On the one hand image improvement; integration into the surrounding you can also say; employees motivation definitely also, this is becoming more and more important, mostly in this area we are active, this is a big request of the employees. Communication of social responsibility I would define as secondary, we communicate that but not super active, it is more a Marketing tool. Economic use is also less at the moment, at the moment we are not earning a lot by this. Maybe you can say if these topics become really important medium- or long-term wise then it will be, out of an economic view, an investment for the future. Currently I wouldn't attribute CR an economic use. At the moment it actually causes more costs. But my colleagues are also convinced that long-term wise it will be of economic use. So an investment for the future. Other goals are reduction of image risks, innovation, and one of the most important goal, fulfilling the customer requests.

9. By reference to the company's CSR activities, which group would you allocate the company to?

- Denier
- Risk minimizer
- Differentiator

We are definitely risk minimizer, and this just because of this only reason, we are using our CR-activities not active enough, so they are not core part of our brand. Meanwhile at Patagonia, VAUDE or Haglöfs sustainability is really a core part of the brand and the identity. We don't have it like that. Our identity is based on the alpine sport, so we actually see us as "absolute alpine", as real "mountaineering brand" and performance-linked brand. Sustainability is more an "add on" for us, so it is somehow an attribute, which is connected with our brand, but we are not trying to differentiate us through this topic.

According to this we are risk minimizer but we are definitely at the head, we definitely scoop out fully the potential of the risk minimizer, we are already at the limit.

Question in between: Do you have a tendency tin direction differentiator?

No actually not. This is exactly the problem we have at the moment. To be able to go further in the CR-area, we have to differentiate more through this attribute and there is always a small tendency visible. The reason for this is, in the brand communication you have to operate very focused. A brand can't signify everything. A brand has to signify something and this for real and long-termed, and our attributes are more alpine sport and performance-safety. Including also sustainability will overload the brand that is why we do not do that.

10. What is the difference between “risk minimizer” and “differentiator” for you?

Differentiator is for me a corporation which builds the whole corporate identity around the sustainability performance of the brand. Where it is really in the centre of the brand. With us this is not the case, it is a part of our brand but rather less important. While Patagonia or Vaude, they differentiate their brand by these topics. We do not differ from the company because we produce the better or lighter clothes, they say, we are the most sustainable outdoor brand, this makes us special and this is our brand. We do not have it like that, we say, buy our jacket because it is the best product on the market and also the lightest and by the way, also sustainable. But Patagonia says “our products are sustainable and by the way also not bad”.

CSR as marketing instrument

11. “The specialized literature points to the fact that corporations are forced by the increasing critical society to develop communications instruments in the CSR area which allow a professional society-oriented communication” (Schaffner, 2013, p.2; own translation).

What is your opinion to this citation?

According to the nowadays boom to the sustainability awareness, is it enough for a company (in the outdoor sports area) using CSR activities/ CSR-communication just for risk minimizing or is the market positioning appointed by CSR as brand differentiation?

In principle, I agree with this quote. It is certainly so, that these topics are very contemporary. It is quite obvious that the sustainability level is relatively high, with many brands, which causes a certain pressure to stay competitive. We now belong more to the brands that are among the pioneers and push the level by that. For us it is not the case that we have to follow up, we rather try to go further. For other brands the quote will be correct and I think nowadays as an outdoor brand with West European focus, you cannot allow to do nothing in the CR area. I think it is impossible today because the consumers simply focus a lot on these things, because the media has an eye on it,

NGOs, etc. This is no longer possible today. However I do not think that all brands can become differentiators, because if all brands are differentiating by this, then it is no longer differentiated, but I rather think that it simply becomes a standard factor/ a hygiene factor, which simply has to be fulfilled to be successful at all in this industry. To differentiate by that will be, I think, reserved just for a few ones, which fully focus on this topic and all the others simply have to accept that and simply not being bad in this area, juts no to be attacked and meet some customer expectations.

12. Does the company conduct “sustainability marketing” (CSR-communication especially for marketing purposes)?

On a really low level. So we are for sure very active in our sustainability management, we deal with the topics, we try to find solutions for this field, but we communicate it quite defensive. That means we have information about the topic on our webpage, we have certain “hangtags” at our products which deal with certain topics, but this is actually all. So it is really rare that we give press releases or conduct advertisement in this area, this we don’t do. We try to inform our customers open, communicate transparently, but we don’t push the topics extremely in the communication.

13. How do you recognize the company’s CSR in the “4 P’s of marketing”?

For sure it is reflected in the product because we are implementing certain measures, that means we have less toxins in our products, we use some environmentally friendly materials, some recycled fabrics, this is visible in the product.

But this is not with us that we now have any mega sustainability design and development approach. We design our products not primarily according to sustainability aspects, but e design our products according to performance criteria and for certain activity and then try, if possible, to achieve the results with the most possible sustainable materials.

14. Does the company use actively CSR activities as communication instrument (internal & external)? If yes what kind of instruments?

We implement CR as active communication tool, internal and external. According to the media work, it is mostly passive, when we get requests, we answer them. It can be, that in media reports or press conferences, we give a statement to CR, and we say, hey we have now new ethical values in our products or we are again FWF leader. So, selectively yes, besides also rather passive at media work.

Publications definitely active, so we have a flyer, we have a CR-report. But here the same, we do not push that extremely. We do not go outside and say on Facebook or internal in our stores, hey look at our new CR-report. We publish it online.

It is the same with the entire online part, we have rubric, that is available for our clients, where

they can get needed information, but we do not promote this active on our Facebook- or YouTube-channels. We are more passive in that.

Employees' magazine definitely, so in every release, I write one article related to sustainability topics.

Employees' formations we also have.

15. Does the company support only CSR activities with direct connection to the corporation's philosophy?

Basically yes. For us, it is important, that there is a direct link to us, to the company. Basically only these activities, which are related to the core business. According to all the other corporate citizenship activities, we say, there has to be minimum one link to mountain sport. But what we did, we supported the donation campaign for the earthquake victims in Nepal, but there we see a direct link to the company, as our clients travel there. But if there is no direct link available, we do not support these projects.

16. According to outdoor sports brands how do you evaluate the future development of CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument?

I hope, that one day, there will be a comprehensive and independent communication tool that enables to inform the clients transparent about the brands' CR activities. So that not every single brand has to communicate for its own, rather I hope there will be slowly a transparency and comparability. Till there is a real comprehensive label, that says e.g. "brand A – sustainability level 2, brand B – sustainability level 3, etc.". By that, the companies are third-party evaluated and communicate this transparent and comprehensive to the clients. Right now, and till this is happening, I think, that CR will be implemented increased as communication marketing tool. So we are, for sure, also forced to communicate these topics actively because they become more and more important for the consumers. I hope that the entire "label jungle" will be summarized in one common label.

17. Based on your opinion is there a lot of *Greenwashing* in the outdoor sports market?

And in your opinion which companies (outdoor sport brands) implement CSR exemplary in the marketing area (no *Greenwashing*)?

This is a difficult question. I would say, that a lot of companies are passive related to their CR communication because they are scared of greenwashing. The entire "greenwashing discussion" leads thereto that a lot of companies mistrust in communicating offensive or active about that.

The brand, that communicated exemplary, is Patagonia. Not because that I say this brand does not implement greenwashing at all, this I cannot evaluate. But what they do definitely, they lead to a

debate on principles of CR topics. Patagonia is also strives for transparent communication. According to their transparency, Patagonia is an idol.

Another optimal example is Fjällräven. Just because they communicate structured and focused.

18. Does the company support the development of CSR in the outdoor sports area together with other brands?

Yes. We are in contact with various organisations and other brands. We work together on projects within the outdoor industry. It is important to find together a solution because one brand alone is not powerful enough to change something in the entire supply chain.

19. Does the company achieve competitive advantage or profit increase by using CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument?

No, right now not. But it is difficult to evaluate that. A more important question is, would we lose clients, if we do implement it badly? I think, we are not present enough for attracting clients by that. I think, consumers, which focus on that, rather buy products from small companies, which focus completely on the sustainability thought.

“CSR-SWOT-Analysis”

20. What kind of strengths does the company have according to CSR as marketing instrument?

We have a clear strategy and focus. It is really important to focus in the CR area because there are 1000 things, one can implement. According to that, we have a very clear vision, where we want to be active and communicate that internal.

A further strength is that we have good standards and implement these. If we work with standards and labels, then with the best ones.

We are very well interconnected and collaborative with other brands in relation to CR topics and push these a lot.

21. What kind of weaknesses does the company have?

We have not many resources for this topic. We are forced to focus and more resources would be good. According to communication/ CR-communication, we are not the best ones. In implementing we are good, in communicating it is improvable.

22. Which chances in the CSR area does the company see in comparison to the competitors?

As already said, we see CR more as a hygienic factor, so we do not see it as a big chance, more as a

basic requirement, that has to be fulfilled for being economical. Another chance is collaborating with other and not working against them.

23. What kind of risks does the company see in the CSR activities in the outdoor sports area?

The question is, if one day, there will be a meta label. It is already a risk, that the communication becomes too inflationary. There are so many standards and labels, it is talked and communicated so much about this topic, so that on one hand, the consumer is satisfied, but on the other hand confused. What can be taken serious and what not? According to the increased pressure communicating more and stronger, the greenwashing risk is increasing.

Interview – Company B

Date: 27.01.2016

Interview Process: E-Mail; own translation

About the company

1. What is your job at the company? **CSR, Sustainability & EHS manager**

2. What is the mission of the company? **Link to corporation's website.**

The company is Europe's most sustainable outdoor equipper. Our products are sustainable and innovative.

3. What is the target group of the company? **Link to corporation's website.**

4. What is the company's definition of "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR)?

Link to corporation's website.

The role of CSR within the company

5. How important is CSR for the company?

Does the company exert CSR activities?

If yes, are they integrated in its business strategy?

Link to corporation's website.

6. In which area of the organisation is CSR allocated? **CEO department**

8. What kind of CSR instruments does the company use? Please name examples.

- **Sponsoring**
- **Cause related marketing**
- **Donation campaigns**
- **Corporate volunteering**
- **Others**

9. Which goals does the company follow with its CSR engagement?

- **Image improvement**
- **Integration into society**
- **Employees' motivation**
- **Communication of social responsibility**
- **Others**

9. By reference to the company's CSR activities, which group would you allocate the company to?

- Denier
- Risk minimizer
- Differentiator

This differentiation we are not doing yet and is also not familiar to me. For sure, we are not “only” risk minimizer, but we are minimizing the risks carefully.

10. What is the difference between “risk minimizer” and “differentiator” for you? *See question before.*

CSR as marketing instrument

11. “The specialized literature points to the fact that corporations are forced by the increasing critical society to develop communications instruments in the CSR area which allow a professional society-oriented communication” (Schaffner, 2013, p.2; own translation).

What is your opinion to this citation? *That’s right, but only communication, without real arrangements for the improvement of the core business sustainability, it is greenwashing.*

According to the nowadays boom to the sustainability awareness, is it enough for a company (in the outdoor sports area) using CSR activities/ CSR-communication just for risk minimizing or is the market positioning appointed by CSR as brand differentiation? *At the end, the environment (also the workers in the production) do not care what motivation a company had for implementing CR activities, essential is, it does implement them...*

12. Does the company conduct “sustainability marketing” (CSR-communication especially for marketing purposes)? *Yes, also: marketing is a positive side effect, if one implements plenty CR arrangements.*

13. How do you recognize the company’s CSR in the “4 P’s of marketing”?

- *Product: sustainable innovative production (Green Shape).*
- *Price: CR must not have any or only minimal impacts on the price, if not, it will not be competitive.*
- *Place: new client groups by clear brand positioning towards CSR, wider presence on the market.*
- *Promotion/ communication: CSR is our core brand message.*

14. Does the company use actively CSR activities as communication instrument (internal & external)? If yes what kind of instruments?

- *Media work*

- *Publications (CR-report)*
- *Online (Facebook, YouTube-channel)*
- *Events*
- *Employees' magazine (intranet)*
- *CR-specific employees' formations*

15. Does the company support only CSR activities with direct connection to the corporation's philosophy?

We are working along the entire supply chain.

16. According to outdoor sports brands how do you evaluate the future development of CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument? *Should not become greenwashing...*

17. Based on your opinion is there a lot of *Greenwashing* in the outdoor sports market? *Own company.*

And in your opinion which companies (outdoor sport brands) implement CSR exemplary in the marketing area (no *Greenwashing*)?

18. Does the company support the development of CSR in the outdoor sports area together with other brands?

For sure, in divers branch organisations, working groups, networks and by our proactive communication of various CSR topics (to bring a painful subject).

19. Does the company achieve competitive advantage or profit increase by using CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument? *Yes.*

"CSR-SWOT-Analysis"

20. What kind of strengths does the company have according to CSR as marketing instrument?

High credibility by integrated and systematic implementation of the CSR strategy and the external success verifications.

21. What kind of weaknesses does the company have?

Clear policy against greenwashing, that means, we communicate often reserved and too less eye-catching, e.g. in the company's stores.

22. Which chances in the CSR area does the company see in comparison to the competitors?

According to CSR, the company is clearly positioned. We are happy, if the entire branch increases the CSR level. The whole branch makes profit out of that/ also according to image.

23. What kind of risks does the company see in the CSR activities in the outdoor sports area?

There are still brand, which put the product performance far over CSR and, by that, threaten the branch image as a whole (see actual Greenpeace report and current media report).

Interview – Company C

Date: 01.08.2016

Interview Process: E-Mail; own translation

About the company

1. What is your job at the company?

PR & Communications manager

2. What is the mission of the company?

Our company philosophy is based on a three-fold responsibility.

People: To create fair human working conditions, to support social initiatives and to foster a multi-cultural company philosophy

Product: To produce the best outdoor equipment which meets the expectations of mountain professionals and enthusiasts

Planet: To produce environmental friendly products and foster a global ecological awareness

True to its principles, the company has now been producing high-quality technical clothing and equipment for mountaineers, outdoor enthusiasts and extreme alpinists since 1974. As a value-based company, we are committed to a sensitive and sustainable approach towards all its stakeholders, employees, consumers, partners and public alike.

3. What is the target group of the company?

Alpinists, mountaineers, outdoor athletes

4. What is the company's definition of "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR)?

As a value-based company, we are committed to a sensitive and sustainable approach towards all its stakeholders, employees, consumers, partners and public alike.

The role of CSR within the company

5. How important is CSR for the company?

Corporate responsibility is anchored in all business departments and is implemented actively.

Does the company exert CSR activities? ***Yes***

If yes, are they integrated in its business strategy? ***Yes***

6. In which area of the organisation is CSR allocated?

PR-department, management, sales department, product development and management

7. What kind of CSR instruments does the company use? Please name examples.

- ***Sponsoring***

- ***Others***

8. Which goals does the company follow with its CSR engagement?

- ***Image improvement***

- ***Integration into society***

- ***Employees' motivation***

- ***Communication of social responsibility***

- ***Sustainable economic benefit***

- *Improvement of production conditions to environmental and social friendly products*

9. By reference to the company's CSR activities, which group would you allocate the company to?

- Denier
- Risk minimizer
- *Differentiator: The organisation puts its focus on sustainability and communicates this actively to its stakeholders. "Differentiator-organisations" stand out by active sustainability marketing and is not only minimizing the competition risk, but rather focus on a market differentiation through sustainability.*

10. What is the difference between "risk minimizer" and "differentiator" for you?

CSR as marketing instrument

11. "The specialized literature points to the fact that corporations are forced by the increasing critical society to develop communications instruments in the CSR area which allow a professional society-oriented communication" (Schaffner, 2013, p.2; own translation).

What is your opinion to this citation? *For demonstrating and being able to correspond the interests of all stakeholders, communication is an important part of the CR strategy,*

According to the nowadays boom to the sustainability awareness, is it enough for a company (in the outdoor sports area) using CSR activities/ CSR-communication just for risk minimizing or is the market positioning appointed by CSR as brand differentiation? *A sustainable production is part of the business philosophy of the company (see first question) and, by that, anchored in all business departments. This is way more than a risk mitigation strategy.*

That means, for avoiding negative critic and being able to stay competitive, it is enough, that outdoor sports companies deal with the topic of sustainability/ corporate responsibility. The organisation's focus does not have to be focused on sustainability.

12. Does the company conduct "sustainability marketing" (CSR-communication especially for marketing purposes)? *No, in the company, CR encompasses mostly a more environmental friendly production, as well as the improvement of environmental and social arrangements; marketing is only a part aspect.*

13. How do you recognize the company's CSR in the "4 P's of marketing"?

Product:

- *The product is produced with as less as possible materials and energy*
- *Environmental materials are implemented*

- *The ability of recycling is taken in consideration*
- *An independent eco-label is implemented*
- *Ethical correct production condition are respected*

Price:

Sustainable should not have an immense influence on the price

Place:

- *Local company standpoints*
- *Optimal use of transportation methods and ways*

Promotion/ communication:

- *Creating a credible and authentic communication/ promotion*
- *Creating a dialogue with the stakeholders*
- *Internal communication of CR*

14. Does the company use actively CSR activities as communication instrument (internal & external)? If yes what kind of instruments?

- *Media work*
- *Publications (no CR-report)*
- *Online (Facebook, YouTube-channel)*
- *Events*
- *CR-specific employees' formations*

15. Does the company support only CSR activities with direct connection to the corporation's philosophy?

No, also other initiatives are supported, e.g. clothes donations at human catastrophes (earthquake in Pakistan), planting trees in Rumania (only two examples of a many). Moreover the company is board-member of the European Outdoor Conservation Association.

16. According to outdoor sports brands how do you evaluate the future development of CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument? *See at question 12 – CR is way more than only marketing.*

17. Based on your opinion is there a lot of *Greenwashing* in the outdoor sports market?

And in your opinion which companies (outdoor sport brands) implement CSR exemplary in the marketing area (no *Greenwashing*)?

18. Does the company support the development of CSR in the outdoor sports area together with other brands? *Yes*

19. Does the company achieve competitive advantage or profit increase by using CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument? *The economic benefit is not based on the marketing instruments, but rather on the strategy, producing as environmental and social friendly as possible.*

“CSR-SWOT-Analysis”

20. What kind of strengths does the company have according to CSR as marketing instrument?

Credibility congruence of production and communication issues (see also at answer 22).

21. What kind of weaknesses does the company have?

22. Which chances in the CSR area does the company see in comparison to the competitors?

Actual communicated goals can be reached, the strategy “small but effective steps” is credible and can be implemented (see also at answer 20).

23. What kind of risks does the company see in the CSR activities in the outdoor sports area?

Interview – Company D

Date: 14.12.2016

Interview Process: E-Mail

About the company

1. What is your job at the company? *CEO*
2. What is the mission of the company? *See attached*
3. What is the target group of the company?
 - a. *Consumers of apparel, footwear and bedding*
 - b. *Apparel, Footwear and Bedding brands*
 - c. *Textile and associated mills that manufacture fabrics and associated materials for the above.*
4. What is the company's definition of "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR)?

Make money, treat all stakeholders fairly, do no harm.

The role of CSR within the company

5. How important is CSR for the company?

Critical. The primary responsibility of a business is to make money. If companies do not make money they cease to exist and all of their stakeholders suffer. Companies that profit by exploiting their customers, suppliers, employees, communities or the environment should, and eventually will, cease to exist.

Does the company exert CSR activities?

Yes, we strive to treat everyone fairly and minimize our environmental footprint. We also ask the question regarding environmental impact any time we are evaluating a new process.

If yes, are they integrated in its business strategy?

Not in an explicit manner, but absolutely with respect to how the company interacts with its stakeholders.

6. In which area of the organisation is CSR allocated?

All. The notion that CSR is or should be separate from every other function of the company is fallacious. It needs to be transparent and at the core of every decision. That can't and won't happen if it is a specific department. CSR is a value that should inform every activity and decision. It is not an isolated activity.

7. What kind of CSR instruments does the company use? Please name examples.

- *All decision-making is predicated on honesty, integrity, transparency and fairness*
- *We do conduct an annual audit that looks for any ethical violations.*

8. Which goals does the company follow with its CSR engagement?

- **Sleeping well at night**
- **Retention of employees**
- **Integration into the progressive business climate in Boulder, Colorado, USA**
- **Sustainable manufacturing**
- **Risk mitigation**

9. By reference to the company's CSR activities, which group would you allocate the company to?

- Denier
- Risk minimizer
- Differentiator

Denier for the most part, although we do note in our marketing communications that our core technology is naturally derived, recycled, human friendly and permanent (doesn't wash out). These attributes, however, do not form the basis of our marketing efforts.

10. What is the difference between "risk minimizer" and "differentiator" for you?

Differentiator's, like Patagonia, look to attract and develop a loyal customer base by marketing their CSR activities to a core audience that highly values those activities. Risk minimizers, like

Nike, look to avoid bad press, fines, lost business or other negative consequences that could result from their CSR (or lack thereof) policies.

CSR as marketing instrument

11. “The specialized literature points to the fact that corporations are forced by the increasing critical society to develop communications instruments in the CSR area which allow a professional society-oriented communication” (Schaffner, 2013, p.2; own translation).

What is your opinion to this citation?

There is undoubtedly some pressure coming from progressives around the world that is forcing companies to develop professional communications in the CSR area, if for no other reason than to protect their image. Although there is increasing pressure to act responsibility on issues like climate change and safe working environments, the United States elected Donald Trump as president despite the fact that he considers climate change a “Chinese hoax”. At the end of the day, it appears that the primary criteria by which societies make decisions is based on their short-term economic interests.

According to the nowadays boom to the sustainability awareness, is it enough for a company (in the outdoor sports area) using CSR activities/ CSR-communication just for risk minimizing or is the market positioning appointed by CSR as brand differentiation?

There is undoubtedly some pressure coming from progressives around the world that is forcing companies to develop professional communications in the CSR area, if for no other reason than to protect their image. Although there is increasing pressure to act responsibility on issues like climate change and safe working environments, the United States elected Donald Trump as president despite the fact that he considers climate change a “Chinese hoax”. At the end of the day, it appears that the primary criteria by which societies make decisions is based on their short-term economic interests.

12. Does the company conduct “sustainability marketing” (CSR-communication especially for marketing purposes)? *No.*

13. How do you recognize the company’s CSR in the “4 P’s of marketing”?

I’m not sure I understand the question.

14. Does the company use actively CSR activities as communication instrument (internal & external)? If yes what kind of instruments?

Not typically. We do make donations to charitable organizations but don't publicize those donations for marketing purposes. Any ancillary benefit we receive via social media is appreciated but not the basis of any donation.

15. Does the company support only CSR activities with direct connection to the corporation's philosophy?

I think the answer is no, but I don't really understand the question.

16. According to outdoor sports brands how do you evaluate the future development of CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument?

Of limited value and not something we will invest in.

17. Based on your opinion is there a lot of *Greenwashing* in the outdoor sports market?
Unquestionably.

And in your opinion which companies (outdoor sport brands) implement CSR exemplary in the marketing area (no *Greenwashing*)? *Patagonia is the most famous and successful.*

18. Does the company support the development of CSR in the outdoor sports area together with other brands? *No, we are not actively part of any group that has CSR development as its focus.*

19. Does the company achieve competitive advantage or profit increase by using CSR as marketing instrument/ communication instrument? *Limited if any*

"CSR-SWOT-Analysis"

20. What kind of strengths does the company have according to CSR as marketing instrument?

Our technology is permanent and doesn't wash out. This has performance advantages. We pay well and treat everyone fairly so this enables us to attract and retain talented employees, as well as maintain favourable relationships with our customers and suppliers.

21. What kind of weaknesses does the company have?

We are a small, ethical company trying to compete against larger companies that are willing to exaggerate their product claims and positive environmental impact.

22. Which chances in the CSR area does the company see in comparison to the competitors?

This is not the focus of our company and I don't foresee that changing. We are competing on the basis of performance and innovation.

23. What kind of risks does the company see in the CSR activities in the outdoor sports area?

"Life is risky; we are all acrobats tiptoeing over one bride or another.

To the tightrope walker, the bridge is just like home” (18th century Japanese poem).

Company D’s mission statement and values:

Mission statement:

The company provides customers with innovative, branded and proprietary technologies that increase the performance, comfort, and value of their products. Our goal is to delight our partners with exceptional service and outstanding quality.

Values:

1. Freedom – Fundamental to our success is the need to develop innovative products and services. We believe this is best achieved by encouraging people to take action on their own initiative in pursuit of a successful company. This requires an entrepreneurial, optimistic and open environment where people are encouraged to be curious and bold. It requires that people have the freedom to take well-reasoned risks and make mistakes without the fear of failure.

2. Quality – Quality is a hard word to define, but we all know it when we see it. Quality comes in many different flavors and surrounds every element of our lives. It can be seen in the products we buy, the services we receive, the discussions we have with loved ones, the books we read, the entertainment we watch and the relationships we have with others. The list is never ending and all encompassing. Life without quality is certainly possible, but everything we do that brings joy to our lives embodies it. At the company we strive to ensure that every action we take, and every product we make embodies a level of quality that screams excellence, attention to detail and continuous improvement.

3. Integrity – Do what you say, keep your commitments, treat everyone fairly: suppliers, customers, co-workers and the company. Take personal responsibility for every one of your decisions and actions, particularly when you make mistakes. Give credit to others and hold each other and our business partners accountable for their commitments and actions. Be consistent and transparent in your dealings with others. Consult your coworkers before making important decisions that will affect the success of the company.

4. Profitability – Our company exists to make money. We cannot hire people, pay competitive salaries, give bonuses, grow, provide new opportunities, make charitable contributions or even exist unless we make money. That means that we must generate profits and a positive cash flow, much like making sure you maintain a positive balance in your checkbook. It is important to understand that our

long-term ability to survive also requires us to have strong supply partners and customers who make money from our business relationships, for without them we don't exist. Every single decision we make to spend money should be considered an investment and made in the context of whether or not this investment will help us become profitable. No matter how insignificant the expenditure, it is critical for all of us to spend the company's money as if it were our own.

Appendix B – Online analysis

Results of online analysis of the brand Patagonia:

	Patagonia
Business mission contains CSR engagement	Yes
CSR/ Sustainability engagement is communicated on main corporation website	Yes
Extra part for CSR/ Sustainability available on website	Yes
Extra CSR mission statement	Yes

Management declarations related to CSR	Yes
Specific annual CSR-/ Sustainability report	No
Code of conduct is communicated	Yes
Partnership with CSR-/ sustainability related associations is communicated	Yes
Third-party verification is communicated on website	Yes
Availability of CSR-label created by corporation	No
Donation campaigns are communicated	Yes
CSR-/ Sustainability awards are communicated	Yes
Brand communicates own created CSR projects	Yes
CSR related advertisement campaigns	Yes
CSR blog/ CSR related FAQ	Yes
CSR related media reports linked on website	Yes
CSR-/ Sustainability related video is available on website	Yes
Company communicates CSR activities actively on social media channels	Yes
Option for product giving back, repairing or recycling worn wear	Yes
Environmental-friendly packaging is communicated	Yes
Information about product care is given	Yes
Consumers gets information about the implementation of sustainability materials	Yes
CSR/ Sustainability related future plans are communicated	No

Data collection of analysed outdoor brands' websites:

	Arc'teryx	Bergans	BlackDiamond	Columbia Sportwear	Fjällräven	Haglöfs	Helly Hansen	Icebreaker	Jack Wolfskin	Mammut Sports Group	Marmot	Millet	MountainEquipment	Ortovox	Prana	Rab	Salewa	Salomon	Tatonka	TheNorthFace	Vaude
Business mission contains CSR engagement	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
CSR/ Sustainability engagement is communicated on main corporation website	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Extra part for CSR/ Sustainability available on website	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extra CSR mission statement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Management declarations related to CSR	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specific annual CSR/ Sustainability report	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Code of conduct is communicated	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Partnership with CSR-/ sustainability related associations is communicated	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Third-party verification is communicated on website	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Availability of CSR-label created by corporation	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Donation campaigns are communicated	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CSR-/ Sustainability awards are communicated	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Brand communicates own created CSR projects	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CSR related advertisement campaigns	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
CSR blog/ CSR related FAQ	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
CSR related media reports linked on website	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
CSR-/ Sustainability related video is available on website	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Company communicates CSR activities actively on social media channels	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Option for product giving back, repairing or recycling worn wear	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Environmental-friendly packaging is communicated	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Information about product care is given	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Consumers gets information about the implementation of sustainability materials	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
CSR/ Sustainability related future plans are communicated	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Amount of “Yes” and “No” answers of the analysed outdoor brands:

	Yes	No
Patagonia	20	3
Arc'teryx	10	13
Bergans	16	7
Black Diamond Equipment	12	11
Columbia Sportswear	6	17
Fjällräven	16	7
Haglöfs	20	3
Helly Hansen	7	16
Icebreaker	14	9
Jack Wolfskin	15	8
Mammut Sports Group	14	9
Marmot Mountain	9	14
Millet	7	16
Mountain Equipment	6	17
Otrovox	3	20
Prana	15	8
Rab	5	18
Salewa	13	10
Salomon	10	13
Tatonka	7	16
The North Face	16	7
Vaude	21	2